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Events, Opportunities

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HEADLINE	11/10 China Covid outbreak worsens
SOURCE	https://www.cnbc.com/2022/11/10/covid-outbreak-worsens-in-southern-chinese-city-of-quangzhou.html

BEIJING — Covid infections are surging in the capital of China's export-heavy Guangdong province, raising concerns of another drag on the national economy.

Schools in eight of 11 districts in the city of Guangzhou moved classes online for most students as of Thursday. In the last few days, more parts of the city have ordered people to stay home, and non-essential businesses to close.

"As things stand, it is hard to tell whether Guangzhou will repeat the experience of Shanghai in spring this year," Nomura's chief China economist Ting Lu and a team said in a note late Wednesday. "If Guangzhou repeats what Shanghai did in spring, it will lead to a new round of pessimism on China."

Earlier this year, the metropolis of Shanghai locked down for about two months and broader Covid controls resulted in a second-quarter national GDP that grew by only 0.4%, according to official figures. [GDP bounced back in the third quarter with 3.9% growth](#), but then [exports unexpectedly dropped in October](#).

It was not immediately clear to what extent Guangzhou's latest business restrictions affected the ability of factories to operate. Many manufacturers are located outside the city but in the same province.

State-owned automaker GAC Group said its manufacturers in Guangzhou were operating normally as of Thursday morning. "The epidemic has not caused substantial impact," the company said in a statement.

In just a week, the number of Covid infections with symptoms in Guangdong has multiplied five times to 500 as of Wednesday. During that time, infections without symptoms surged seven times to about 2,500 cases.

The latest outbreak prompted the American Chamber of Commerce in China to postpone an event in Guangzhou, which was already delayed from September, Michael Hart, president of the chamber, said Thursday. He expects two more of the chamber's events in the city this year will be postponed.

"These travel impacts are hurting the abilities of local governments to pitch for investments," Hart said, noting such investments were not lost but delayed.

"I've canceled more travel than I've actually been able to do," he said.

Late fall is a popular time for conferences and business travel in China.

Notably, Guangzhou has indefinitely delayed its auto show that was set to kick off next week. The country's biggest auto show that Beijing was supposed to host earlier this year was never rescheduled.

More travel restrictions

"Probably a bigger concern [than getting sick] is what does [travel] do to your Beijing health code and can you get back?" Hart said, referring to a government smartphone app for tracking Covid exposure.

The city requires anyone entering a shopping mall, taxi or public space to use the app. The venue can deny entry if the app shows the individual does not have a negative Covid test result from within the last three days — or bears a "pop-up window" that's supposed to indicate suspected contact with a Covid infection. The pop-up window prevents people from entering Beijing.

Its appearance has become so frequent and somewhat unpredictable that a Chinese commentator said in a widely shared video that every business trip outside of Beijing was a choice between family and work. The video was removed from public view by Thursday morning.

The Beijing health code app's pop-up window also affects the mobility of people within the capital city, which has reported a growing number of infections over the last several days.

	“In Beijing, you just assume a certain percentage of the workforce is going to have pop-up window issues,” Hart said, noting virus testing requirements for some office buildings has increased to once every 24 hours. “Instead of getting looser it’s getting tighter in some areas.”
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HEADLINE	11/10 Study: masks cut Covid spread in schools
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/10/health/covid-schools-masks.html
GIST	<p>Masks have been a cultural flash point since the start of the pandemic, and mask mandates in schools have been especially incendiary. Critics have argued that there is no strong evidence to prove that masks slow the spread of Covid, and that in any case children weren’t wearing the right kinds of masks or weren’t wearing them properly.</p> <p>Now a research paper details a so-called natural experiment that occurred when all but two school districts in the greater Boston area lifted mask requirements in the spring. Researchers took that opportunity to make a direct comparison of the spread of Covid in masking and non-masking schools.</p> <p>The bottom line: Masking mandates were linked with significantly reduced numbers of Covid cases in schools.</p> <p>Infection rates were lower among masked students — even in Boston’s public schools, where many buildings are old and lack good ventilation systems, classrooms are crowded and students are more often from at-risk communities — than among unmasked students attending newer schools in communities like Cambridge and Newton.</p> <p>The study, by scientists at Harvard’s T.H. Chan School of Public Health and Massachusetts General Hospital, the Boston University School of Public Health and Boston’s Public Health Commission, was published on Wednesday in The New England Journal of Medicine.</p> <p>The data should help dispel misinformation about the effectiveness of universal masking requirements in stemming viral transmission in schools, said Julia Raifman, an assistant professor at the Boston University School of Public Health and an author of an editorial accompanying the new study.</p> <p>“Even as recently as this summer, people were saying, ‘Oh, Covid doesn’t spread in schools,’ and there was a misconception that kids don’t get Covid,” said Dr. Raifman, who was not involved in the new research. “But what we see in the study is that Covid does spread in schools, and it spreads back home, and it spreads to teachers.”</p> <p>The study did not specify the types of masks worn by the children, suggesting that any type was at least somewhat protective, she added.</p> <p>“This study shows that if people are wearing masks as a group, that it reduces transmission for everyone in the population, and it reduces school absences and teacher absences,” Dr. Raifman said.</p> <p>Even after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lifted mask requirements for schools last year, many states kept the mandates. Massachusetts, along with 18 other states and Washington, D.C., kept masking in place in public schools at the start of the 2021-22 school year but rescinded the policy in February.</p> <p>Until then, trends in Covid incidence were similar across school districts in the greater Boston area. After lifting the mask mandate, the state required districts to continue reporting all Covid cases among students and staff members and provided funding and support services for testing.</p> <p>The researchers involved in the study used that data to track Covid cases week by week in 72 school districts, comparing the two that had retained masking for 15 weeks — Boston and Chelsea — with 70 others that had lifted mask requirements at different times.</p>

Removing of mask mandates was associated with an additional 44.9 Covid cases per 1,000 students and staff members, corresponding to an estimated 11,901 cases during the 15-week period, the scientists concluded.

“We saw sustained, increased rates of Covid incidence consistently in schools that lifted the mask requirement,” said Tori L. Cowger, the study’s first author and a postdoctoral fellow at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

In 12 weeks of the 15-week period, “we saw increased incidence that was statistically significant,” she added.

But just one in three Covid cases in schools where mask mandates had been lifted was attributable to the change in policy; four in 10 cases among staff members were attributable to the policy change, she said.

Because people who tested positive were instructed to isolate for at least five days, the additional cases led to at least 17,500 missed school days for students and 6,500 missed school days for staff members, the study calculated.

Cheryl Buckman said her 9-year-old son, a third-grader in a Boston public school, had developed symptoms of Covid within days after the school lifted masking requirements late last year.

Both Ms. Buckman and her son have asthma and a blood disorder that makes it difficult to fight off infections, and she became ill just as he was recovering. Both ran high fevers for several days, she said, and he missed more than a week of school. She had to postpone needed surgery because of her illness.

“Honestly, it’s careless to remove a mandate too soon,” Ms. Buckman said in an interview. “The whole district stopped masking, except on the buses, and when he wore a mask he got made fun of, so he was afraid to wear it.”

Ms. Buckman’s son has autism, she added, and he was terrified of Covid. “He knew so many people had died from it,” she said.

Opponents of masking in schools have criticized the data on its effectiveness, but they have also raised other concerns.

Masking may cause communication problems and delays in speech development, may be particularly onerous for children with learning disabilities and makes it difficult to read or communicate emotional expressions, critics have said.

And many adults, as well as children, just find masks very uncomfortable, especially when worn for a whole school day.

Dr. Tracy Beth Hoeg, an epidemiologist and fierce critic of school masking, noted that the new study was observational and not a randomized, controlled clinical trial. As such, she said, it can point to a correlation but cannot prove a causal relationship between mandatory masking and a lower incidence of Covid.

Dr. Shira Doron, an infectious-disease physician at Tufts Medical Center in Boston who has criticized mask mandates in schools in the past, said that the new study was just one publication and that the medical literature on mask mandates in schools was mixed.

Schools did not abandon mask policies because they were ineffective at curbing viral transmission, Dr. Doron said, but because they could lead to other complications.

“Children with language-learning difficulties are having trouble understanding their teachers and their peers,” Dr. Doron said. “Children with speech difficulties are having trouble being understood to the point

that they withdraw. Children and staff with hearing difficulties are having trouble communicating and understanding each other.”

She added, “Even teachers who chose to continue wearing a mask prefer there not be a mandate, so they don’t have to deal with discipline all day.”

But a Boston parents’ group, BPS Families for Covid Safety, has already called for reinstating of universal masking in schools, saying that the new study provides evidence that the practice protects against both illness and lost days of learning in a district where vaccination rates are relatively low and families come from communities that have suffered disproportionately during the pandemic.

At the very least, universal masking should be implemented if an outbreak occurs at the school or in the larger community, and after students return from vacations, which often involve traveling and family gatherings, said Sarah Horsley, a co-founder of the group and a parent of a fourth-grader.

“We got an email a few weeks ago from school officials saying they were strongly encouraging masks because of wastewater testing showing high amounts of virus,” Ms. Horsley said. “But the majority of students still aren’t wearing them.”

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HEADLINE	11/10 Facebook founder: layoffs hardest call
SOURCE	https://www.businessinsider.com/mark-zuckerberg-lay-off-meta-staff-hardest-call-facebook-video-2022-11
GIST	<p>Mark Zuckerberg on Wednesday said laying off Meta employees was one of the most difficult decisions he's had to make since he founded the company in 2004.</p> <p>In a video call, a portion of which was obtained by NBC News, Zuckerberg addressed employees on Wednesday at 1 p.m. ET after he sent out a memo to the company about the job cuts. In the memo, the Meta CEO said more than 11,000 workers would lose their jobs.</p> <p>Just as he wrote in the memo, Zuckerberg said in the call that he took full responsibility for the decision to let staff go.</p> <p>"I'm the founder and CEO, I'm responsible for the health of our company, for our direction, and for deciding how we execute that, including things like this," Zuckerberg said in the clip, which NBC News said was provided by a laid-off Meta employee.</p> <p>"This was ultimately my call," Zuckerberg added. "It was one of the hardest calls that I've had to make in the 18 years of running the company."</p> <p>Zuckerberg said the decision was hard not only because it impacted employees' lives, but also because the company was losing staff for the mission.</p> <p>"You've really put your heart and soul into this place. Each of you is talented and passionate. Each of you has played a role in making Meta the success that it is. No matter what team you may have worked on, each of you played a role in contributing to the products that billions of people use to connect every day," he said during the call, per NBC News.</p> <p>Zuckerberg hosted two calls on Wednesday, a person with knowledge of the matter told the outlet. One call was for laid-off Meta employees and the other was for staff who were staying on at the company.</p> <p>The layoffs impacted around 13% of Meta's workforce Meta. The company owns Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram. The cuts came as Twitter and Salesforce also decided to reduce their workforce.</p> <p>Zuckerberg's approach was a stark contrast to the way that Elon Musk's Twitter dealt with layoffs.</p>

	Although Twitter expressed regret for the situation, workers who had been impacted were sent emails bluntly titled "Your Role at Twitter," which stated: "Today is your last working day at the company."
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HEADLINE	11/10 WeWork to exit 40 locations to cut costs
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/business/wework-exit-40-locations-us-cut-costs-2022-11-10/
GIST	<p>Nov 10 (Reuters) - WeWork Inc (WE.N) said on Thursday it will exit about 40 locations across the United States and forecast current-quarter revenue below estimates as the flexible workspace provider faces high expenses and a strong U.S. dollar.</p> <p>The company has been working to curb its real estate footprint and reduce headcount as it grapples with long-term lease obligations that stood at \$15.57 billion as of September-end. Some of WeWork's tenants, in contrast, are only on short-term leases.</p> <p>WeWork went public in 2021 after a two-year struggle and currently has a market cap of around \$1.77 billion. Its pre-IPO valuation was once pegged at nearly \$50 billion.</p> <p>Its shares were down 1.6% at \$2.39 in premarket trade on Thursday.</p> <p>The closures, of about 41,000 workstations, are expected to pull down revenue but the simultaneous cost reductions will contribute roughly \$140 million to annual adjusted core earnings, it said.</p> <p>The company did not disclose which U.S. locations it would exit.</p> <p>The New York-based firm also reported third-quarter revenue of \$817 million, below market expectations of \$865 million, according to a Refinitiv poll of five analysts.</p> <p>Net loss per diluted share came in at 75 cents per share, below estimates for a loss of 45 cents.</p> <p>WeWork expects fourth-quarter revenue to be between \$870 million and \$890 million, below expectations of \$923.8 million.</p> <p>The company also said it extended the maturity date of its \$500 million senior secured notes from February 2024 to March 2025. The notes remained undrawn at the end of the quarter.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/10 Britain freezes Russian assets
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/britain-says-it-has-frozen-18-billion-pounds-worth-russian-assets-2022-11-10/
GIST	<p>LONDON, Nov 10 (Reuters) - The British government said on Thursday it had frozen assets worth more than 18 billion pounds (\$20.5 billion) held by Russian oligarchs, other individuals and businesses sanctioned over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.</p> <p>Russia has overtaken Libya and Iran to become Britain's most-sanctioned nation, the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI), part of the finance ministry, said in its annual report.</p> <p>The frozen Russian assets were 6 billion pounds more than the amount reported across all other British sanctions regimes.</p> <p>Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich and businessman Mikhail Fridman are among those sanctioned this year, along with President Vladimir Putin, his family and military commanders.</p>

The frozen assets are a combination of shareholdings in companies and cash held in bank accounts. It does not include physical assets such as real estate, yachts or assets held in Crown Dependencies such as Guernsey and Jersey.

The government has sanctioned 95% of Russian exports to the United Kingdom and all imports of Russian oil and gas will stop by the end of the year.

"We have imposed the most severe sanctions ever on Russia and it is crippling their war machine," said Andrew Griffith, a junior government minister in the Treasury in a statement.

"Our message is clear: we will not allow Putin to succeed in this brutal war."

Britain has so far sanctioned more than 1,200 individuals including high-profile businessmen and prominent politicians and more than 120 entities in Russia.

SANCTIONS HURTING

Western sanctions mean a depletion of stockpiled parts for the automotive industry, with new cars such as the latest Lada model being produced without airbags or anti-lock brakes, officials said.

Russian aerospace companies are stripping airliners for spare parts and using semiconductors in kitchen appliances in Soviet-era tanks, the officials said, adding that a shortage of ammunition has played a role in Ukraine's recent battlefield successes.

Longer-term, Russia is suffering a brain drain and a lack of access to critical technologies, with 75% of companies reducing operations and 25% leaving the country entirely, officials said.

While Russian assets are currently only frozen, there are discussions on what options are available to seize them. Western officials say there is a need for large-scale financial help to rebuild Ukraine and a moral case for those responsible for the invasion to contribute to this.

"I think what we would like to do is look at what all the options are, what's possible, and then take a decision with allies on that," one official said.

Since Britain began imposing travel bans, asset freezes and other sanctions on Feb. 24, the day Russian forces invaded Ukraine, the government has received 236 reports of sanction breaches.

Russian billionaire Petr Aven is challenging allegations that he evaded sanctions against him in a London court. He is accused of using money parked in British accounts to fund his lifestyle.

The case is the first to test Britain's approach to enforcing sanctions on Russian nationals since the invasion.

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HEADLINE	11/09 Recall: Adam's Polishes hand gels
SOURCE	https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/fda-handsanitizer-methanol/2022/11/09/id/1095701/
GIST	<p>A batch of hand sanitizer was recalled after it was found to contain a toxin that can cause seizures and blindness.</p> <p>The Food and Drug Administration found undeclared methanol, which is a toxic type of alcohol that can kill if ingested, in Adam's Polishes hand gels.</p> <p>Methanol is a type of alcohol used for making plastics, car parts, paints and building materials. People who accidentally drink these hand sanitizers are risking coma, seizures, permanent blindness, permanent damage to the central nervous system and death, according to the FDA.</p>

	<p>There have not been any reports of illness from the product so far, but the FDA has noted instances where ingesting methanol-based products have led to blindness, hospitalizations and death.</p> <p>The company is voluntarily recalling batch 133475, in addition to 19 other batches as a precautionary measure. The FDA said that anyone who owns any of the recalled products should throw them out immediately.</p> <p>According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, methanol can be absorbed into the body via inhalation, ingestion, skin contact or eye contact; and symptoms may not show until one to 72 hours after ingesting it. Ingestion of methanol can lead to amnesia, vomiting, anorexia, diarrhea, abnormal liver function and hallucinations.</p> <p>The FDA said that anyone who has come into contact with the product should contact their doctor or health care provider should they have any symptoms.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/10 Young climate activists: too much talk
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/science-mexico-climate-and-environment-government-politics-543dafba41cd5da908d47195ec5255a2
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON (AP) — The climate change generation is saying officials are talking too much, listening too little and acting even less. And they are fed up.</p> <p>“Instead of talking about how to solve the climate crisis, they negotiate about how to continue polluting,” said Mitzy Violeta, a 23-year old indigenous activist from Mexico. “Youth movements are realizing the solution isn’t going to be in international gatherings,” like the one taking place in Egypt.</p> <p>“We’re upset with the inaction that’s being done,” said Jasmine Wynn, 18, of the environmental group Treeage.</p> <p>With decades of warmer and extreme weather ahead of them, young climate activists envision a future that has them frustrated and anxious, according to more than 130 activists questioned by The Associated Press. Most of them said they think their strikes and protests are effective. But lately in high-profile, attention-grabbing actions, a handful of activists have gone beyond skipping school to targeting art work, tires and fossil fuel depots.</p> <p>Experts and funders expect these in-your-face actions to escalate.</p> <p>“They will do whatever is non-violently necessary. They’re on fire,” said Margaret Klein Salamon, a clinical psychologist who runs the Climate Emergency Fund that financially backs some of the in-your-face protest events. “They’re so passionate. Some of that comes from youth, sure. But it is powered by reality, by having a sort of confrontation with the truth.”</p> <p>At one of the more traditional protests in New York City in September, 14-year-old Truly Hort said she was scared about the future: “I’ve always had all these dreams, and now I’m like ‘God, I can’t do that.’”</p> <p>The trouble, she said, is that leaders talk about what they hope to do, “but it’s not a lot of people taking action.”</p> <p>Also mentioning her anxiety at the same protest 16-year-old Lucia Dec-Prat said, “it’s one thing to worry about the future and it’s another to get out there and do something about it.”</p> <p>But protesting only does so much, Dec-Prat said: “I honestly feel that adults aren’t listening.”</p> <p>Governments and international organizations are advancing too slowly to fight climate change, many of those interviewed said about climate conferences. A vast majority of activists asked agreed with Greta</p>

Thunberg's characterization of climate negotiations as all talk and no action, or "blah blah blah," as the Swedish activist put it in a speech last year.

"So rather than just making noise to contribute to the blah blah blah, make noise for action. I think that has to be the critical thing," said 25-year-old Jevanic Henry of St. Lucia in the Caribbean. "We are driving action."

"Money doesn't matter because we're not going to have anywhere to live," said Aniva Clarke, a 17-year old activist from Samoa. "And that's probably the biggest issue that a lot of world leaders aren't really focusing on."

While many youth activists don't feel they are being listened to, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres credited the world's youth for spurring negotiators to do more. University of Maryland social scientist Dana Fisher, who studies the environment movement and youth activists, said they've testified before Congress and spoken before the United Nations and at past climate negotiations.

"Young people have gotten a lot more say than they did in any other time during my adult life," Fisher said. "I think a lot of them felt like because they were invited and given these opportunities that that meant everybody's going to snap and change policy."

And she said that's not what happens, which then causes them to get frustrated.

Speaking at a London cultural event, Thunberg said annual climate conferences like the one in Egypt will not bring about meaningful change. "Unless, of course, we use them as an opportunity to mobilize," she said, "and make people realize what a scam this is and realize that these systems are failing us."

One of the most prominent youth climate activists, Vanessa Nakate of Uganda, has been both on the outside as a protestor starting the Rise Up Movement and later inside as a UNICEF ambassador on climate change.

"The question should be like, what should the leaders do? What should governments do? Because this whole time I've done activism, I have realized the youth have done everything," Nakate told The Associated Press.

And there's little doubt about who young activists think needs to foot the bill in the fight against climate change: wealthy, industrialized nations that historically have emitted more greenhouse gases than poorer ones. Rich countries have pledged to pay poor ones to adapt against the hurricanes, droughts and floods made worse by climate change, but so far they've not fulfilled their \$100 billion promise.

While investors on Wall Street continue pouring money into funds that call themselves 'green,' many young climate activists blame free-market capitalism itself for adding heat-trapping gasses to the atmosphere — something that adult analysts and officials often ignore as a factor.

Most of those interviewed called targeting corporations and businesses with more pressure, protests, and shaming — like a recent New York demonstration staged inside financial investment firm BlackRock's headquarters — an effective tactic in fighting climate change.

Minutes before they marched past the famous Wall Street bull statue and near the site of the Occupy Wall Street movement, 17-year-old Oscar Gurbelic squarely blamed the free market system and big business.

"Inherently climate change and capitalism are intertwined," Gurbelic said.

Many say they're willing to make changes to their own lives to take responsibility for reducing emissions. They fly and drive less, and walk more. A large chunk of activists questioned say they would

likely have fewer children because of climate change. Most said they don't take part in certain activities at least once per week because it is wasteful or polluting.

"We no longer want to live in a world in which we only seek to consume and use things and discard them," said Violeta of Mexico.

Similar to other protest movements, there are differences in thought over whether to work inside or outside the system. Some activists that AP spoke with collaborate with governments, international organizations and non-profit groups to raise awareness of climate risks facing their communities. Others strictly work at the grassroots level, fighting the powers that be.

Experts studying youth climate activists say that while the generation they belong to is the most educated in history, many want to pause their educations to focus on climate action. Others, like Jevanic Henry, want to merge their professional lives with climate activism. He's worked for governments and non-profits on climate issues.

"I'm trying to remain optimistic as much as I can," Henry said in an interview, but he said it's tempered by a fear that socioeconomic collapse will come if action is not taken across the board.

But hope only goes so far.

"More and more people are going to be upset and frustrated and willing to take more aggressive action," University of Maryland's Fisher said. "And the problem is that at some point that can become violent."

The newer tactics, such as throwing soup or mashed potatoes on famous art work — which has glass protecting them from damage — is born from that frustration, Climate Emergency Fund's Klein Salamon said.

"We've tried everything. Marches and lobbying, writing letters, making phone calls," Klein Salamon said. "We're just not where we need to be."

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HEADLINE	11/09 Latest Covid variants can evade vaccine
SOURCE	https://time.com/6230059/covid-19-variants-omicron-vaccine/
GIST	<p>New lab data suggest that vaccines and prior infections may not offer enough protection against several new COVID-19 variants cropping up in the U.S. and around the world.</p> <p>Dr. David Ho, director of Columbia University's Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center (ADARC), and his team reported the results from a set of studies at an ADARC symposium. They showed how well some of the latest variants—BQ.1, BQ.1.1, XBB, and XBB.1, which were all derived from Omicron—are evading both vaccine-derived and infection-derived immunity.</p> <p>These new variants all have mutations in the region that binds to cells and infects them, which means that they're highly transmissible, as prior Omicron variants were. BQ.1 is growing steadily in France, according to the public database of SARS-CoV-2 variants GISAID. By mid-November, European health officials expect the variant to account for 50% of cases in Europe, and to become the dominant strain in that region by early 2023. XBB is growing quickly in Singapore and India. Both variants have spawned new strains that have each picked up an additional mutation to create BQ.1.1 and XBB.1. As of early November, BQ.1 and BQ.1.1, combined, now make up about 35% of new cases in the U.S.</p> <p>Other studies have found similar drops in antibody protection against BQ.1 among vaccinated people. But Ho's group conducted what is likely the most comprehensive look to date at BQ.1, BQ.1.1, XBB, and XBB.1, and how existing immunity—from the original mRNA vaccines, the new Omicron boosters, and natural infections—stands up to them. Scientists took blood sera from 88 people in five groups (below) and exposed it to the four variants in the lab. Here's what they found:</p>

- **Fully vaccinated and once-boosted people** (three total shots of the original mRNA vaccines) had 37- and 55-fold lower neutralization against BQ.1 and BQ.1.1, respectively, than they did against the original SARS-CoV-2 virus, and about 70-fold lower neutralization against XBB and XBB.1.
- **Fully vaccinated and twice-boosted people** (four total shots of the original mRNA vaccines) had 43- and 81-fold lower neutralization against BQ.1 and BQ.1.1, respectively, than they did against the original virus, and 145- and 155-fold lower neutralization against XBB and XBB.1, respectively.
- **Fully vaccinated and twice-boosted people** (three shots of the original vaccine plus one [Omicron booster](#)) had 24- and 41-fold lower neutralization against BQ.1 and BQ.1.1, respectively, than they did against the original virus, and 66- and 85-fold lower neutralization against XBB and XBB.1, respectively.
- **Fully vaccinated people who had received the original booster and who had been infected with BA.2** had 20- and 29-fold lower neutralization against BQ.1 and BQ.1.1, respectively, than they did against the original virus, and 103- and 135-fold lower neutralization against XBB and XBB.1, respectively.
- **Fully vaccinated people who had received the original booster and who had been infected with BA.4 or BA.5** had 13- and 31-fold lower neutralization against BQ.1 and BQ.1.1, respectively, than they did against the original virus, and 86- and 96-fold lower neutralization against XBB and XBB.1, respectively.

The results show that people who had been infected with BA.2, BA.4, or BA.5 generally experienced the smallest drop in neutralizing antibody levels against BQ.1 and BQ.1.1. But people who had three doses of the original vaccine and one Omicron booster produced only slightly better neutralizing antibody protection against XBB and XBB.1 than those who received three doses of the original vaccine. Public-health experts say that while vaccines may wane in efficacy against newer variants, they continue to protect people from severe COVID-19. There is early evidence that vaccine-induced immunity may also produce a broader range of virus-fighting antibodies over time.

Still, these results are a reminder that vaccines and drug treatments need to evolve with the virus. “These new variants are extremely good at evading our antibodies and are very likely to compromise the efficacy of our vaccines,” says Ho. They may also dodge the available antibody-based treatments for COVID-19, he says. The [National Institutes of Health’s COVID-19 Treatment Guidelines](#) currently only include one monoclonal antibody therapy, bebtelovimab, because the virus has evaded all of the previously authorized antibody treatments. But in an October update, NIH scientists acknowledged that the “subvariants BQ.1 and BQ.1.1 are likely to be resistant to bebtelovimab.” The drug is therefore only recommended if people either can’t take the antiviral drugs [Paxlovid](#) or [remdesivir](#), or if these medications aren’t available. The virus can evade these treatments as well, but they remain the first line of defense against severe SARS-CoV-2.

The good news is that in places where these variants are spreading, they do not seem to be linked to more severe COVID-19 disease—measured by hospitalizations and deaths—than other Omicron iterations. Still, public-health experts say a spike in infections could still strain health resources, especially as other respiratory infections, including [influenza](#) and [RSV](#), also gain momentum. The combination of several circulating infectious diseases could mean more illness overall, and, in turn, more people who might experience severe disease and require intensive medical care.

The rise of BQ.1, BQ.1.1, XBB, and XBB.1 points to the fact that when it comes to immunity, the virus may always be one step ahead, especially with respect to vaccines. “I would start to make these vaccines, and start to test them in animals,” says Ho. Even if those efforts began now, it’s possible they may still lag behind the virus and the new mutations it continues to gain. That’s why researchers are working on developing vaccines that would be more universally applicable to a range of different coronaviruses, which could shorten the amount of time it takes to build up a vaccinated population’s immunity.

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SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/nov/10/big-rise-in-number-of-fossil-fuel-lobbyists-at-cop27-climate-summit
GIST	<p>There are more than 600 fossil fuel lobbyists at the Cop27 climate conference, a rise of more than 25% from last year and outnumbering any one frontline community affected by the climate crisis.</p> <p>There are 636 lobbyists from the oil and gas industries registered to attend the UN event in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. At Glasgow, the figure was 503, which outnumbered the delegation of any single country. This year the only country with a larger delegation is the United Arab Emirates, hosts of Cop28 next year, which has 1,070 registered delegates, up from 176 last year.</p> <p>At Cop27, “the influence of fossil fuel lobbyists is greater than frontline countries and communities. Delegations from African countries and Indigenous communities are dwarfed by representatives of corporate interests”, said the group Kick Big Polluters out, which campaigns against the influence of fossil fuel lobbyists at the climate negotiations.</p> <p>The data on lobbyists, compiled by the organisations Corporate Accountability, Global Witness and Corporate Europe Observatory, shows the growing influence of oil and gas interests at the climate talks.</p> <p>While many environmental groups hoping to encourage the transition away from fossil fuels say it can be beneficial to bring private interests to the negotiating table, these benefits risk being outweighed by the sheer size of the delegations and suspicions that lobbyists attend the talks to slow progress rather than discuss limiting their own industries.</p> <p>Civil society groups fear that the increasing presence of fossil fuel lobbyists risks stymieing negotiations at an essential time, amid efforts to keep global temperature rises within the 1.5C of warming scientists agree is needed to prevent catastrophic climate change.</p> <p>“The explosion in the number of industry delegates attending the negotiations reinforces the conviction of the climate justice community that the industry views the Cop as a carnival of sorts, and not a space to address the ongoing and imminent climate crisis,” said Kwami Kpondzo from Friends of the Earth Togo.</p> <p>In a recent submission to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change – the body which oversees the Cop – to discuss the role of private business at the talks, a coalition of civil society groups said “climate action will continue to fail to meaningfully address the climate crisis as long as polluting interests are granted unmitigated access to policymaking processes and are allowed to unduly influence and weaken the critical work of the UNFCCC”.</p> <p>In response, the United States Council for International Business (USCIB) pushed back against any suggestion that there should be limits on corporate interests at the climate talks, claiming this would “damage and slow implementation [and] marginalise one of the most central constituencies in the UNFCCC process”.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/09 China Xi tells army: focus on prep for war
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/09/xi-jinping-tells-chinas-army-to-focus-on-preparation-for-war
GIST	<p>Xi Jinping has told the People’s Liberation Army to “focus all its energy on fighting” in preparation for war, a Chinese Communist party mouthpiece has reported.</p> <p>Pictures of Xi, who recently secured a third term as party leader, in his army uniform during a visit to a command centre featured prominently on the front page of the People’s Daily on Wednesday.</p> <p>Xi said the army must “comprehensively strengthen military training in preparation for war”, having warned at a recent party congress of “dangerous storms” on the horizon.</p>

“Focus all [your] energy on fighting, work hard on fighting and improve [your] capability to win,” he was quoted as saying. The army must also “resolutely defend national sovereignty and national security” as China was in an “unstable and uncertain” security situation, he reportedly said.

While Xi also ordered the army to focus on war preparation in 2013, soon after he took power, and again in 2017, political analysts say he has markedly stepped up his rhetoric this time. In a similar visit to the command centre in 2016, he told officers to be “loyal” and “resourceful” in fighting and “courageous and capable of winning wars”.

“He is sending a message to the United States and Taiwan,” said Willy Lam, a senior fellow at the Washington-based Jamestown Foundation. Although China’s military strength was not yet at par with the US, Xi’s decision-making was not always based on rational calculation, he said.

Xi made a veiled attack on the US’s increasingly explicit support for Taipei at the 20th party congress, which concluded in Beijing last month, blaming “foreign interference” for exacerbating tensions. Xi sees seizing Taiwan as a key part of his legacy and said in his opening speech at the congress: “We will never promise to renounce the use of force.”

Joe Biden has repeatedly pledged that the US would defend Taiwan if it was attacked. After the US House speaker, Nancy Pelosi, visited Taiwan in August, the People’s Liberation Army reportedly moved several warships and planes near to the median line, an unofficial border between China and Taiwan in the Taiwan Strait.

Xi in recent months has used increasingly aggressive tones to urge his cadres to “dare to struggle” and boost their “fighting spirit” to defend national interests in a hostile political environment. In his opening speech at the party congress, he used the word douzheng (“struggle”) 17 times, which harked back to Mao Zedong’s emphasis on “class struggle” and combat against foreign, imperialist influence, and he used the word for “security” about 50 times.

This week a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson criticised the UK trade minister Greg Hands’ visit to Taiwan and told the British government to “cease sending wrong signals to separatist forces for Taiwan independence”.

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HEADLINE	11/10 Day 260 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/10/russia-ukraine-war-at-a-glance-what-we-know-on-day-260-of-the-invasion
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There have been diverging reactions to Russia’s announcement on Wednesday that it will withdraw its troops from the right bank of Kherson region - in what would be another defeat for its forces.• On Wednesday the Russian defence minister, Sergei Shoigu ordered troops to leave Ukraine’s southern city of Kherson, the only regional capital Moscow had captured since the invasion began. The announcement marks one of Russia’s most significant retreats and a potential turning point in the war. General Sergei Surovikin, in overall command of the war, called it a “very difficult decision”.• While Russia did not formally declare it was abandoning Kherson, all signs point to a Moscow retreat. “Kherson cannot be fully supplied and function,” Surovikin said. “The decision to defend on the left bank of the Dnipro is not easy, at the same time we will save the lives of our military.” Russia had been preparing its exit for the last month, moving command and control across the river.• Ukrainian victory in Kherson will be a significant blow to the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, only weeks after a high-profile ceremony in Moscow in which he announced the “forever” annexation of the Kherson region along with three other regions.• Ukraine reacted with caution, saying some Russian forces were still in Kherson and additional Russian manpower was being sent. “Until the Ukrainian flag is flying over Kherson, it

makes no sense to talk about a Russian withdrawal,” said **Mykhailo Podolyak**, a senior adviser to the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy.

- **Joe Biden said Russia’s withdrawal of troops from Kherson was “evidence” that its military had “real problems”.** During a White House press conference on Wednesday, the US president said he “knew for some time” it would happen.
- Russia’s loss of Kherson’s west bank will likely prevent its forces from achieving their strategic aspiration of a land bridge reaching Odesa, according to the **UK Ministry of Defence**. “With limited crossing points, Russian forces will be vulnerable in crossing the Dnipro River,” the latest British intelligence report reads.
- **The Nato secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg, said Russia’s retreat was “part of an overall pattern” demonstrating that Moscow “has absolutely lost the momentum”.** “But we should not underestimate Russia, they still have capabilities,” he told Sky News. “We have seen the drones, we have seen the missile attacks. It shows that Russia can still inflict a lot of damage.”
- Russia’s decision to withdraw troops from near the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson is a positive step, Turkish President **Recep Tayyip Erdoğan** said.
- **America’s top general and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, estimates that Russia’s military had seen more than 100,000 of its soldiers killed and wounded in Ukraine**, adding Kyiv’s armed forces has “probably” suffered a similar level of casualties in the war. **Mark Milley**’s remarks offer the highest US estimate of casualties to date in the nearly nine-month-old conflict.
- **Italy** has not ruled out new measures to provide further military support for Ukraine but these are not on table at the moment, defence minister **Guido Crosetto** told Il Messaggero daily.
- **The US reportedly will not give [Ukraine](#) advanced drones in order to avoid an escalation with Russia**, according to the Wall Street Journal. Kyiv has pleaded for the weaponry for months. The Biden administration’s decision reflects the limit of the kinds of weaponry Washington is willing to provide for Ukraine’s defence, the WSJ noted.
- **Putin** may only take part in the upcoming summit of the G20 group of nations in Bali via video link, Russian state news agency RIA said on Thursday, citing the Russian embassy in Indonesia. **Zelenskiy** is also due to appear via video.
- **The global dash for gas amid the Ukraine war will accelerate climate breakdown and could send temperatures soaring far beyond the 1.5C limit of safety, [analysis has shown](#).** If all of the new gas projects announced in response to the global gas supply crunch are fulfilled, the resulting greenhouse gas emissions would add up to about 10% of the total amount of carbon dioxide that can safely be emitted by 2050.
- Police on Jersey have admitted they conducted unlawful searches at premises allegedly linked to Russian businessman **Roman Abramovich** and have agreed to pay damages and apologise.
- **The deputy head of the Russian-installed administration in the Kherson region died in a car crash**, state news agencies reported, citing local Russian-backed officials. **Kirill Stremousov**, previously an anti-vaccine blogger and political marginal, emerged as one of the most prominent public faces of the Russian occupation of Ukraine. Putin posthumously decorated Stremousov with the Order of Courage, the Kremlin said on Wednesday.
- **Senior UN officials were planning to meet members of a high-level Russian delegation in Geneva on Friday to discuss extending the [Ukraine](#) grain deal**, a UN spokesperson said. “They will continue ongoing consultations in support of the efforts by the secretary general António Guterres on the full implementation of the two agreements signed on 22 July in Istanbul,” the spokesperson said.
- **Stoltenberg said Putin made “several huge mistakes” when he invaded, including underestimating Nato’s ability to support Ukraine.**
- **The Russian foreign ministry said Moscow had contact with US officials from time to time**, and confirmed there would soon be US-Russia consultations on the New Start nuclear arms reduction treaty, the last remaining arms control agreement between the world’s two largest nuclear powers.

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HEADLINE	11/10 Fresh effort for nuclear disarmament
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/10/nuclear-disarmament-activists-putin-ukraine

As [nuclear dangers gather momentum](#) three decades after the cold war, a disarmament movement is rising to meet them, with a new generation of activists.

[In the late 50s and early 60s](#), and then again in the early 80s, when the US and the Soviet Union were pointing their missiles at each other in Europe, there were mass street protests against governments making plans for global annihilation.

The [Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament \(CND\) was born in the UK](#) and staged large-scale marches to the heart of the British nuclear weapons establishment at Aldermaston. More than four decades ago, [a million Americans converged](#) on New York's Central Park to call a halt to the arms race and a nuclear freeze. At the end of 1982, more than [30,000 women formed a human chain](#) around the Greenham Common air force base as an act of resistance to the deployment of US cruise missiles there. In October 1983, CND staged the biggest march through London the city had ever seen.

With Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, and his [repeated threats that he would use nuclear weapons](#) if his regime felt in peril, the danger is every bit as real as it was during the Cuban missile crisis or the missile standoff in Europe. This time, there have not been any mass protests but there has been a popular response that has found other channels to express itself.

At the vanguard of the new movement is the [International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons](#) (Ican), which successfully canvassed support for a Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) at the UN general assembly, leading to its adoption in 2017.

Since then, more than 90 countries have signed the treaty and 68 have ratified it. It has not stopped the US and [Russia](#) from upgrading their arsenals and China from pursuing plans to become a third leading nuclear weapons power, but Beatrice Fihn, Ican's executive director, said the ultimate aim was something more enduring: the delegitimization of nuclear weapons around the world.

"It makes it harder to see what is happening as you're maybe not seeing so many people out on the streets," said Fihn, who accepted the [2017 Nobel peace prize](#) on Ican's behalf. But she added: "The movement is very much here, and we're definitely growing and building."

While continuing the work of CND and the nuclear freeze movement, Ican and its 652 partner organisations around the world are seeking inspiration from other forms of civil society action, including the campaigns to ban landmines and cluster munitions, which sought to lay down new norms, and redraw the red lines of what is acceptable on the international stage.

"We're trying to undo the brainwashing of accepting nuclear weapons as normal," Fihn said. The movement's greatest source of leverage, she argued, was the need of nuclear weapons for legitimacy. "We see that with Russia right now. They're fighting hard to re-establish legitimacy around the nuclear weapons and their security council seat and around the narrative of this war. And to me, it's a sign that they are vulnerable."

Kate Hudson, CND's general secretary, says new membership has surged since Russia's all-out invasion of [Ukraine](#) was unleashed.

"Activism is there in a big way, but it's taking new forms, and it's more fluid than previously: the way people understand and act on the links between issues, politically and in campaigning terms," Hudson said.

The nuclear disarmament movement is no longer in a silo of its own, she argued, as it shares common concerns for those fighting to stop climate crisis, or to uphold social justice in a world where governments are spending huge amounts on nuclear stockpiles while the poorest people in their society are cold and hungry.

The [Black Lives Matter](#) (BLM) movement is now framing nuclear disarmament as a social justice issue for many newly recruited activists, making it a far more diverse field.

Mari Faines, partner for mobilisation in the Global Zero disarmament advocacy group, said BLM prompted her to see more clearly the “correlation between the systems of policing and militarism”, and the overlap between the nuclear weapons complex, social justice struggles and other existential threats.

“I’m hopeful and optimistic that this new wave of young and diverse voices that are stepping into this space are thinking through that,” Faines said. “They’re thinking about diplomatic answers in a different way. They’re reimagining what security could and should look like.”

Molly Hurley, who was born in China but was adopted by a white American family, said the nuclear disarmament movement was not quite as open as it thought itself to be.

“The nuke space is not the most welcoming for young people, for women of colour, for anyone of colour,” she said. After a few years working for disarmament activist groups, Hurley, who turns 27 in November, has started an arts degree in Baltimore. She still made the trip to a nuclear conference in Washington put on last month by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. She explained: “The issues themselves are things I can’t just stop caring about.”

As Russia steps up its aggression in Ukraine, a sense of dread and anxiety has spread among Hurley’s friends. For them, she said, it is just one more existential threat over which they have no control.

“One of my friends specifically told me: I am just so overwhelmed by the prospects of the entire world ending due to the decisions of just a few white guys who I will never meet and who will never listen to anything I have to say,” she said.

Hurley is experimenting with new ways to talk about geopolitical threats. While working on her art degree, she writes a column on the Inkstick website, and her latest was about what the US and China might learn from the enemies-to-lovers trope in romantic fiction.

“You cannot fear-monger your way to a mass movement,” she said, arguing that what has been perceived as apathy within her generation was really a “coping mechanism for hopelessness”. The solution, she argued, was to offer some grounds for hope.

“There are things that we can do and we need to make clear all these feasible, very concrete steps that can be taken.”

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HEADLINE	11/09 US refuses advanced drones for Ukraine
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-wont-give-ukraine-advanced-drones-to-avoid-escalation-with-russia-11668042100
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON—The Biden administration won’t give Ukraine advanced drones despite pleas from Kyiv and a bipartisan group of members of Congress, a reflection of the limit of the kinds of weaponry Washington is willing to provide for Ukraine’s defense.</p> <p>The decision deprives Ukraine of the kind of advanced weaponry Kyiv has been requesting for months. The Pentagon declined the request based on concerns that providing the Gray Eagle MQ-1C drones could escalate the conflict and signal to Moscow that the U.S. was providing weapons that could target positions inside Russia, U.S. officials and other people familiar with the decision said</p> <p>U.S. officials, at times, have also worried that the technology aboard the drone could be stolen on the battlefield. But those concerns, that the cameras on board the platform could be stolen if the aircraft were to be shot down, weren’t a central aspect of the decision, officials said.</p>

A spokesman for General Atomics, which makes the Gray Eagle, confirmed that the company had been made aware of a decision, but declined to comment on the details. Pentagon officials had no immediate comment.

The White House didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Members of Congress from both parties have pushed the administration to give Ukraine the medium altitude, armed drones that can fly for more than 24 hours. In a September letter, 17 lawmakers urged the administration to speed up its review process about providing Gray Eagles, which spurred a briefing on Capitol Hill about the decision, congressional officials familiar with the briefing said.

"While important, thorough risk assessments and mitigation should not come at the expense of Ukrainian lives," the bipartisan group of legislators wrote in their September letter.

The decision came as Russia announced a withdrawal of its troops Wednesday from the southern city of Kherson and surrounding areas, in what could be one of its biggest retreats since its February invasion. Ukrainian officials warned that Russia could be bluffing and that a significant number of troops remain in Kherson.

Declining to give Ukraine armed drones makes it harder for its soldiers to defend civilian populations and infrastructure that Russia has targeted throughout the war, advocates said.

"Ukrainians have shown they are capable and responsible stewards of the military aid that we the United States provide them," said Mykola Murskyj, director of government affairs for Razom for Ukraine, a U.S. aid group.

"It means Ukrainian soldiers have to put their lives at risk to take out artillery positions that are bombing Ukrainian towns and villages."

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HEADLINE	11/09 Brace for triple wave of seasonal viruses
SOURCE	https://www.wired.com/story/covid-flu-rsv-tripledemic/
GIST	<p>EVERY YEAR IT'S the same. As soon as it starts to get cold, people gather indoors. Windows are pulled shut. Commuters forgo walking or cycling, opting for packed buses and subways. Our whole world retreats to where it's warm, our breath condensing on the windows of homes, offices, schools, and transport, showing just how well we've sealed ourselves off from the outside. We create, in short, the perfect breeding ground for viruses.</p> <p>When the respiratory virus season begins, it's usually quite predictable. Patients start being admitted to hospitals with influenza or respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) around October in the northern hemisphere. Thousands of people get ill, and many die, but the odd extreme year aside, health systems across Europe and North America aren't typically at risk of being overwhelmed.</p> <p>But the pandemic has derailed this predictability. It has added another virus to the seasonal mix, and flu and RSV are returning this year with a vengeance. A "twin" or even "tripledemic" could be on the way, with all three viruses hitting at once, illnesses soaring, and health systems creaking under the pressure.</p> <p>Already there are signs this is happening.</p> <p>Many hospitals in the US are at capacity, caring for large numbers of children infected with RSV and other viruses, many more than would be expected at this time of year. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) doesn't track RSV cases, hospitalizations, and deaths as it does for flu, but hospitals across the country have been reporting peak levels typically observed in December and January. Nearly one in five PCR tests for RSV came back positive in the week ending October 29, with this rate having doubled over the course of a month. Generally speaking, the higher the proportion of</p>

tests that come back positive, the more common a virus is in the wider community. In the three years before the pandemic, an [average of just 3 percent](#) of tests came back positive in October.

This is a hangover from the pandemic. Over the past two years, RSV and flu were kept down thanks to the protective measures people took against the coronavirus: mask wearing, hand washing, and isolating. Between the beginning of the pandemic and March 2021, the weekly positivity rate for RSV tests remained below 1 percent, according to the CDC—down where it was in pre-pandemic times.

In July of this year, health specialists warned in [The Lancet](#) that the benefits of these pandemic precautions could end up having a negative effect this winter season. Reducing exposure to common endemic viruses such as RSV and flu, experts argued, risked creating an “immunity gap” in people either born during the pandemic or who hadn’t previously built up sufficient immunity against these viruses.

That prediction now appears to be coming true, as children are catching these viruses for the first time, without having built up any prior immunity, and falling badly ill. “We’re seeing kids at older ages getting RSV that would have previously got it at a younger age,” says Rachel Baker, an assistant professor of epidemiology at Brown University in Rhode Island, who was a coauthor of the *Lancet* comment piece. “That’s putting some pressure on hospitals.”

RSV typically causes mild cold-like symptoms, but infections can be dangerous for infants. Their tiny lungs and muscles cannot muster the strength to cough up or sneeze out the mucus in their airways. Deaths are rare, but the virus [can kill](#). Adults with weaker immune systems are vulnerable too, such as those with underlying health conditions or who are very old. Unlike for Covid-19 and flu, there are currently no approved RSV vaccines (Pfizer has one in trials, given to pregnant people to protect infants, that may become available next year).

Flu hospitalizations have also been higher than usual for this time of year—[13,000 adults and children have been hospitalized](#) in the US so far, and 730 people have died. “We’re seeing the highest influenza hospitalization rates going back a decade,” José Romero, director of the CDC’s National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, said on November 4. And a similar picture is emerging across Europe. The United Kingdom’s Health Security Agency [said in late October](#) that hospital admissions for respiratory diseases are rising, and they’re climbing fastest in children under 5.

The fact that the southern hemisphere is coming off a pretty bad winter season—Australia experienced its [worst flu season in five years](#)—is another signal that the northern hemisphere is in for a rough one.

Flu viruses that circulate during the southern hemisphere winter often end up infecting people in the north six months later, so more illness in Australia suggests this winter’s flu in the US and Europe will be particularly virulent. “For many healthy adults this will predominantly be an inconvenience, but for vulnerable groups this could be a concern,” says Neil Mabbott, professor of immunopathology at the University of Edinburgh in the UK.

This winter will be the first time that these three respiratory viruses can circulate completely freely, meaning there is a real prospect of things getting worse. But SARS-CoV-2, because of its ability to mutate, is a wildcard when trying to guess exactly what will happen. “It’s like a dream and a nightmare for someone doing prediction,” says Mary Krauland, a research assistant professor who models SARS-CoV-2 and influenza outbreaks at the University of Pittsburgh.

Because there are no plans to reintroduce control measures, Krauland says it is quite possible that SARS-CoV-2 infections will surge again this winter, ratcheting up pressure on health services. It is unclear whether that surge would collide with the influenza and RSV peaks. “You can imagine many scenarios, but it’s very difficult to pin down which one is the most likely,” she says. At the moment, most Covid cases are caused by lineages of the Omicron variant that seem to cause milder disease than earlier forms of the virus but which are able to dodge immunity from vaccines and previous infections. These variants and subvariants also compete with each other for human hosts. Should a new, more

infectious variant emerge and outcompete the others, Krauland says, infections could rise sharply again. Hospitals could then feel the effects, because as infections accumulate, the number of hospitalizations and deaths also increase.

For the health system, two or three simultaneous epidemics is a worrying scenario, but so too is the prospect of contracting more than one virus at the same time. Scientists are not sure how the viruses interact, but there is evidence that simultaneously catching SARS-CoV-2 and influenza increases the risk of severe illness and death. In a study of nearly 7,000 hospitalized patients with Covid-19, researchers in the UK found that 227 patients had also tested positive for the flu, and they were more likely to require ventilation.

But how the influenza and RSV viruses interact and influence the course of disease is not clear: There have been few studies investigating this, with conflicting results, says Pablo Murcia, professor of integrative virology at the University of Glasgow. This is due to various confounding factors that muddy the water in coinfections, such as a patient's preexisting conditions or their immunological status, the strains of viruses involved, or the time that's elapsed between the first and second viral infection.

Catching both viruses at the same time is a troubling possibility. In a lab experiment, Murcia and his team deliberately infected human lung cells with both viruses and found that they fused together to form a palm-tree-shaped hybrid virus—with RSV forming the trunk and influenza the leaves—which could infect new cells even in the presence of flu antibodies, in essence using its new form to bypass existing flu immunity. Their findings were published in the journal *Nature Microbiology* in October. But it's not known whether hybrid viruses form in people, and if they do, whether they cause disease, says Murcia.

Krauland expects that few people will contract multiple viruses at once, provided they stay at home as soon as they notice any symptoms of infection, even if mild. "The three are kind of competing for hosts at this point," she says, and if they are, this could lead to all three viral waves being flattened. But whether this will happen—and if so, if it will keep hospitals from buckling under the pressure—we probably won't know until spring.

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HEADLINE	11/10 Russia war bloggers split over retreat
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/11/10/world/ukraine-war-news-russia-updates#russian-war-bloggers-kherson
GIST	<p>They feared it might come for weeks, but still, when a Russian commander announced on Wednesday that Russian troops would be pulled from the strategically important city of Kherson, Ukraine, Russian hawkish military bloggers and commentators responded with despair, anguish and denial.</p> <p>"I will never forget that murder of Russian hopes," Zastavny, a popular blogger, said in a post on the Telegram messaging app. "This betrayal is now carved up on my heart for centuries."</p> <p>Boris Rozhin, a pro-Russian military analyst, called the retreat Russia's "most serious military defeat since 1991." In a Telegram post, he said, "If there won't be any upcoming successes with major towns captured and no advancement during the winter offensive, the series of military setbacks would accumulate a much greater internal discontent than sanctions."</p> <p>But Margarita Simonyan, the editor of RT, Russia's global television network, said on Twitter that it was the right move to protect Russia's Army from further losses. "As long as the army is intact, there is hope to end the war with honor," she wrote, quoting a famed Russian military commander from the time of the Napoleonic wars. "With the loss of the army, not only Moscow — all of Russia will be lost."</p> <p>The war in Ukraine has propelled Russian military bloggers — a group of hawkish pro-invasion analysts, activists and fighters — into an increasingly vocal force in the Russian media and political landscape. Most opposition news websites and other news media have been banned by the Kremlin, leaving few</p>

	<p>alternatives for Russians to follow the war aside from the Russian Defense Ministry’s mundane daily briefings. The bloggers’ channels on Telegram, with their swift updates of the situation on the front, have gained thousands of followers during the war.</p> <p>As Russia began to suffer clear battlefield setbacks, however, many of these bloggers started to criticize the military’s top brass, and even the country’s politicians, for not preparing the army.</p> <p>For instance, Vladlen Tatarsky, a popular blogger and activist, reacted to the news about Kherson by saying that Russia’s overall plan for war was “idiotic” and “based on disinformation.”</p> <p>Many bloggers blamed fundamental issues for the setbacks, such as the rampant corruption that has been endemic in the Russian Army. Rybar, a popular blogger, said false reports that were being sent to the military top brass were among the core reasons for the Russian retreat.</p> <p>Yuri Kotyonok, another popular blogger, mixed rational analysis with the sense of despair, or even desperation. “It will leave a scar on my heart, you can’t get used to it,” he said in a post. “It’s been a hard day.”</p>
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HEADLINE	11/09 Jordan is running out of water
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/09/world/middleeast/jordan-water-cop-27.html
GIST	<p>AMMAN, Jordan — Residents of Jordan, one of the driest countries in the world, have long been accustomed to a household water supply of only about 36 hours a week. But recently, even that meager flow has been curtailed by the debilitating combination of a warming planet and swelling demand.</p> <p>Rajaa al-Bawabiji, 64, like many others in the capital, Amman, plans her days accordingly. A human rights lawyer during the week, on Fridays she turns into a domestic marathoner, frantically cleaning, washing clothes and cooking three big meals during the brief window when the water flows.</p> <p>But household taps ran dry this summer for as long as three weeks in parts of this small, dehydrated Middle Eastern nation. By early summer, when her taps did not spring to life on schedule, Ms. al-Bawabiji said she feared more outages were coming.</p> <p>Everyone was anxious about water, she recalled. So she bought a second tank for her roof and chipped in with her neighbors to fill it with water purchased from a private water tanker business.</p> <p>“If you want to feel free, you need three tanks,” she said with a sigh.</p> <p>Population growth, diminished water supplies and climate change have all taken their toll, while damaged and inefficient infrastructure and the considerable challenges posed by Jordan’s geography and topography have only made things worse. The resulting shortages serve as a warning of what the future might hold for the region and the world beyond it.</p> <p>All of the country’s major water sources are near the borders, and water must be transported inland, an energy-intensive and increasingly expensive process as fuel prices rise. Rainfall has decreased precipitously in recent decades and warmer temperatures mean that what rain does come evaporates rapidly. Longer and hotter summers have already shortened growing seasons for farmers.</p> <p>“Climate change is really aggressively hitting Jordan in the last two years,” said Motasem Saidan, a former water minister and professor at the University of Jordan.</p> <p>The country’s namesake river is nearly running dry. The flow in the Jordan River is less than 10 percent of its historical average, and the Yarmouk River, a major tributary, is greatly diminished. The Jordan’s once-rushing waters feed into the Dead Sea, a saltwater lake that is disappearing.</p>

The rivers are uneasily shared with neighbors: Israel and Syria upstream have diverted water for years for their own use. Increasing supply from these sources is challenging, particularly with Israel, which has had a chilly peace with Jordan for decades now.

All of this has led to an overreliance on extracting groundwater from aquifers below the earth's surface. The aquifers are being drained at roughly twice the rate at which they can be replenished naturally and now account for about 60 percent of the country's water supply.

Omar Salameh, a spokesman for the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, said the government was well aware of the dangers of exhausting the groundwater supply. But as the population has grown — in no small part because of waves of refugees from Syria and other countries facing conflict — the government has come under pressure to meet soaring demand, he said.

The population is now estimated to exceed 11 million, up from 8 million just a decade ago, including more than 760,000 people registered with the United Nations as refugees.

"We don't have other alternatives," Mr. Salameh said.

For those with means, solutions and workarounds are available, at a price. But those without must simply go without.

Many Jordanians turn to private water tankers. But the prices charged by those tankers, which are ubiquitous in wealthier neighborhoods of the capital Amman, rose to new heights this past summer. Buildings and homes keep water tanks on the roof, which are replenished by the government and rationed through the week. Wealthier households often have multiple tanks, which they can also fill with water purchased from the private trucks.

The vulnerable are hardest hit by the water shortages. The poor cannot afford to buy from private trucks and have less capacity to store water. All households have to buy their own tanks, and if one is damaged, the consequences are dire.

Ibtisam Yousef Abdelrahman, 55, a Palestinian who lives in the Wihdat refugee camp in southeast Amman, shares a two-room apartment with her husband, daughters and two grandchildren. They received a new tank from UNICEF during the pandemic to replace a damaged, rusty steel one. But in mid-September, the UNICEF tank broke, and the precious water gushed into the street.

"I started crying, running around the neighborhood," she said. "Now there's no water, and I worry."

Without the ability to save water for use throughout the week, she is back to going around to her neighbors with a bucket, imploring them to share. Her family is skipping showers and forgoing cleaning. She shrieks every time someone washes their hands, admonishing them not to waste a drop.

The average amount of water available each year to a resident of Jordan is well below the "absolute water scarcity" threshold of 500 cubic meters set by the United Nations. Mr. Salameh said it is about 80.

Desalination is a promising lifeline for Jordan, but it will not happen quickly. A large-scale desalination project in the port city of Aqaba on the Red Sea is in the works, but it will take years.

There is one potential quick fix: buying more water from Israel, a pioneer in desalination techniques. Cooperation on water was an important element of the 1994 peace treaty between the two countries, and they signed a water-for-energy agreement at the United Nations climate conference in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm el Sheikh on Tuesday.

Protests broke out in Amman last year when the plan, which was brokered by the United Arab Emirates and would involve Jordan sending solar energy to Israel in exchange for water, was first announced. An

overreliance on Israel water is unpalatable to many Jordanians, who oppose the occupation of the Palestinian territories.

But water is a critical national security issue in Jordan, and shortages threaten to destabilize a stalwart U.S. Arab ally that has been an oasis of calm in a turbulent neighborhood. Iyad Dahiyat, a former water ministry official, said the water portfolio is as important as the military given the threats to Jordan posed by climate change.

One recent study predicted that severe and potentially destabilizing water shortages will become common in Jordan by 2100 unless the country makes significant changes.

“The government needs to increase supply to communities to limit discontent,” said Sandra Ruckstuhl, an American researcher based in Amman and a senior adviser at the International Water Management.

Ms. Ruckstuhl and other experts say the government needs to raise water prices based on household income to account for the soaring cost of delivering it to homes and businesses. But many Jordanians are already struggling with unemployment and high prices and that would be an added, and unpopular, burden.

Choosing crops wisely and managing water are crucial for Jordanian agriculture as climate change accelerates. The sector once used about 70 percent of the country’s water supply, though it contributes relatively little to the gross domestic product.

Use has decreased to around 50 percent, which Mr. Salameh, the government spokesman, cited as a promising indicator. But many farmers still focus on water-intensive crops that are becoming more difficult to grow.

Khairuddin Shukri, 68, is a retired farm owner and a consultant who has long pushed for crops that require less water and bring in more money. He said the water issue revolves around planning and pointed to inefficient practices and waste.

“It’s a country with huge potential but lack of management,” he said of Jordan.

On a visit to a date farm that Mr. Shukri helps oversee, he showed off the crop that he has championed for years: Medjool dates, which can tolerate salty, lower-quality water, and garner high prices.

Yields at farms in the area were small this summer because the fields received less water and what did come was saltier than usual. At one farm, they grew only half of the more water-intensive crops like eggplants, tomatoes, peppers that they sell to the international supermarket chain Carrefour, Mr. Shukri said.

At an olive farm, his team faced an unusual case of water theft during a heat wave, and by the time they restored the water supply, they had lost the whole crop.

“You lose a crop, you lose a year of your life” Mr. Shukri said, shaking his head.

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HEADLINE	11/10 Hurricane Nicole makes Florida landfall
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/11/10/us/hurricane-nicole-florida
GIST	<p>Nicole, a Category 1 hurricane with powerful winds extending for hundreds of miles, came ashore on Florida’s Atlantic coast early Thursday morning.</p> <p>Nicole’s center made landfall south of Vero Beach, Fla., the National Hurricane Center said in an update at 3 a.m. Eastern time. The storm was moving inland at about 15 miles per hour.</p>

More than five million people in eastern Florida [were under hurricane warnings](#), which indicate that hurricane effects are expected.

Forecasters said that Nicole, which battered the Bahamas on Wednesday, was likely to cause large swells and coastal flooding as its center moves north across Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas over the next two days.

The storm was on the lowest rung of the five-tier wind scale that forecasters use to measure tropical cyclones in the Atlantic Ocean. But it is a meteorological oddity because its core is wrapped in a wind field stretching for nearly 500 miles. That is greater than the distance from Boston to Washington, D.C.

Hurricane Nicole was the first to make landfall along Florida's Atlantic coast since Katrina in 2005. The landfall also came at the second-latest point in the calendar year that a hurricane has hit the continental United States.

The latest:

- Evacuation orders took effect on Wednesday in several counties along Florida's Atlantic coast. The area is still recovering from Hurricane Ian, which [slammed into southwest Florida](#) as a Category 4 storm in September.
- Some Florida airports suspended flights on Wednesday, and Disney World and Universal Orlando closed early.
- More than 11,000 customers were without electricity in Martin and St. Lucie counties on Wednesday afternoon, [according to poweroutage.us](#), a site that tracks power interruptions.

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HEADLINE	11/09 China's 'zero-Covid' guessing game
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/09/business/china-zero-covid-markets.html
GIST	<p>It is the great economic guessing game about China: When will the Chinese government ditch its zero-tolerance approach to Covid-19?</p> <p>Companies and manufacturers are worrying about their profits, while uncertainty is rippling through financial markets. Global leaders and policymakers are sizing up Beijing's moves as part of their own growth calculations, given China's central role in the global economy.</p> <p>The answer comes down to one man — the country's top leader, Xi Jinping. His word is all the more sacrosanct since he secured a precedent-defying third term late last month at the Communist Party's congress, where he stacked his leadership with loyalists and set out an agenda that shook global assumptions about the trajectory of the world's second-largest economy.</p> <p>The lack of visibility into his thinking has left the world trying to divine whether even the smallest signals could indicate the government is fine-tuning its "zero-Covid" policy to limit the harm to the economy. After the congress, China's financial markets took a plunge over concerns about Mr. Xi's power play. Shortly thereafter, speculation about loosening Covid restrictions sent them soaring.</p> <p>Each day seems to bring new disparate data points for the markets to digest. Low-level health officials urge less drastic enforcement of existing measures, while top officials repeat that they are staying the course.</p> <p>The authorities are facing a dilemma. Nationwide, daily cases are at a six-month high, with China reporting more than 8,100 new infections per day. Under the usual playbook, officials are resorting to more lengthy lockdowns and costly mass testing to try to stop the spread.</p> <p>And in China, nothing will be certain until Mr. Xi stops trumpeting "zero Covid" or clearly articulates that the country is changing direction.</p>

In a world beset by [war in Ukraine](#), skyrocketing [inflation](#) and rising fears of a [global recession](#), China could have been a bright spot for growth. While most countries dealt with widespread infections and mass deaths in the first year of the pandemic, China kept the virus largely in check with snap lockdowns and quarantines, and its [economy thrived](#) relative to the rest of the world.

As new Covid variants have proved milder and vaccines have become more widespread, the rest of the world has moved on from strict policies. China has stuck to the same heavy-handed approach, concerned that a large number of deaths could come with a policy change, and [reluctant to import](#) more potent foreign vaccines.

With each new outbreak and infectious strain of Covid-19, the uncertainty grows over how and when Mr. Xi will dismantle his pandemic policy.

“China has this boot on the neck of economic activity, and we’re past the point where the boot made sense,” said Jude Blanchette, an expert on China at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. “The problem is, the most authoritative voice continues to reiterate no change.”

Easing Covid policy matters for the economy. People are staying home, fearful that they might cross paths with someone infected and be sent to a long quarantine under heavy guard. China continues to isolate not just those sick with Covid but anyone who has come in contact with them. Many stores and eateries have closed.

The world’s largest iPhone manufacturing complex, in the north-central Chinese city of Zhengzhou, went into a lockdown in mid-October and again this month. Some employees [fled](#) the 200,000-worker facility with stories of food shortages flooding the internet. Apple this week [warned that its sales](#) would be short of expectations because of the drastic measures.

The warning, and China’s latest Covid situation, were described by one analyst as “an absolute gut punch” for the company ahead of the most important holiday season.

The Chinese financial markets, at times, appear disconnected from reality. Investors hoping for a change in policy are pouncing on any information, often rumors or thinly sourced reports, sending the markets on a roller coaster ride.

Rosy reports from Wall Street banks, pointing to the opportunity for rewards when China opens up, have also helped to fuel rallies. A report from Goldman Sachs this week predicted Chinese stocks could jump 20 percent “on (and before) reopening” from the pandemic.

Often, investors are seizing on official signals, even if the Chinese government isn’t actually revealing much. At a news conference on Saturday in Beijing, for example, senior health officials declared that they were “unswervingly” committed to zero-Covid policies, but within reason.

While much of the country remains committed to the zero-Covid strategy, there are signs that the approach is reaching its limit. The financial pressures are mounting on local governments that are running out of money to pay for Covid control measures like mass testing. The social costs, too, are amplifying as more and more people are caught in lengthy lockdowns, their [anger](#), [frustration](#) and [discontent slipping](#) through internet censors.

The authorities have quietly responded to some of the excesses, including reining in neighborhood guards who resort to violence to enforce the restrictions. The police in a Shandong Province community announced on Tuesday that seven guards there had been detained for beating and dragging people, in a statement that quickly went viral on the Chinese internet and was not censored.

Officials are also offering tiny hints that they might consider a new approach if medical advances could ease the pressure on China’s health care system.

The city of Shanghai recently began offering a new inhaled Covid-19 vaccine developed by the Chinese pharmaceutical group CanSino Biologics, which officials have said could significantly enhance immunity and appeal to a portion of the population still hesitant to vaccines. More than a dozen cities are expected to offer the vaccine soon.

Two Chinese pharmaceutical companies are [close to gaining approval](#) of mRNA vaccines based on technology first developed and approved in the United States. China has also made progress in drafting distribution agreements with foreign drug companies, and developing and acquiring Covid treatments, including a homegrown antiviral pill.

Citing such developments, Zeng Guang, a former chief epidemiologist at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, told investors last week that the conditions for China to open up and loosen its policy were improving. His comments, at a private investor event held by Citigroup, spread quickly online and prompted a rise in financial markets. A spokesperson for Citi declined to comment.

For investors, it is hard to tell whether these small signals will translate into a broader easing of Covid controls, said Richard Harris, the chief executive of Port Shelter Investment Management in Hong Kong.

“They’re trying to play both sides at the same time without giving in on the central cause, which is a Covid-zero policy,” he said.

Many investors are sitting on the sidelines waiting for more concrete evidence.

Winston Feng, the portfolio manager at MassAve Global, said he was looking at how the authorities in the southern city of Guangzhou were handling a sudden spike in cases in recent days. Last year, officials responded to relatively few cases with severe restrictions on people’s movements, sending robotic trucks with food into districts under lockdown. This time, he said, officials have launched mass testing requirements but so far have avoided a citywide lockdown.

“The nuance here is how much of that experimentation is now being conducted,” Mr. Feng said, adding that he expected China to take small measures to reopen but also impose renewed restrictions if needed to bring local outbreaks under control.

“There will be moments,” he said, “when you feel like you’re taking two steps forward, one step back.”

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HEADLINE	11/09 Ukraine peace talks remain distant
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/09/us/politics/ukraine-russia-peace-talks.html
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — American and European officials say serious peace talks between Ukraine and Russia are unlikely in the near future, even as the Biden administration tries to fend off growing questions from some members of Congress about the U.S. government’s open-ended investment in the war.</p> <p>Russian and Ukrainian officials have made separate public comments in recent days about potential peace negotiations, more than six months after their last known direct talks fell apart. But U.S. officials say that they do not believe talks will begin soon and that both sides think continued fighting, for now, will strengthen their eventual negotiating positions.</p> <p>They also concede that it is difficult to envision terms of a settlement that Ukraine and Russia would accept.</p> <p>Ukrainian officials are optimistic about their military prospects after making unexpectedly large gains this fall. Their morale soared again on Wednesday, when Russia ordered its forces to retreat from the southern city of Kherson.</p>

Perhaps more important, American and European officials say, Ukraine's population has been hardened by Russia's devastating military campaign, which has destroyed civilian areas and resulted in massacres, rape and looting. Even if Ukrainian leaders were prepared to make concessions to bring the fighting to an end, their people are not disposed to accept that, the officials say.

American officials say Russia's recent attacks on critical infrastructure have made negotiations less likely by eroding any public support for compromise.

And while President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia has endured repeated military losses and retreats, officials say he believes that the United States and Europe — as they grapple with soaring energy prices, fears of nuclear escalation and political instability — could lose their will to continue supporting Ukraine at current levels.

After his military's apparent embarrassment in Kherson, Mr. Putin is less likely to pursue peace than to redouble his efforts to pressure Kyiv and the West. Western officials see events this fall such as the suspected sabotage of Germany's rail system and drone surveillance over Norway's offshore oil platforms as possible harbingers of greater Russian disruptions.

More than eight months after Russia's invasion, U.S. and European officials are hard-pressed to describe a plausible endgame to the conflict that would be acceptable to President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine and to Mr. Putin, who has long been obsessed with the country.

President Biden said Wednesday that it was the Ukrainians who would ultimately decide their country's end state. "Nothing about Ukraine without Ukraine," he said. The White House has committed to not negotiating anything about Ukraine's future without Kyiv's representatives present.

But Mr. Biden faces growing pressure from some quarters of Congress. As the war grinds on, House Republicans say they plan to intensify scrutiny of U.S. aid to Ukraine, especially humanitarian assistance.

And some advocates of negotiations say that talks should begin to at least explore possibilities for common ground. Last month, 30 progressive House Democrats sent — then quickly withdrew under political pressure — a letter to Mr. Biden calling for "redoubling efforts to seek a realistic framework for a cease-fire."

"The issue is not whether you can see an overlap in their positions on a Venn diagram right now, or that we see Russia pre-emptively prepared to make concessions," said Samuel Charap, an analyst at the RAND Corporation. "It's that there's a value to having open channels to lay the groundwork for the future. Talking and fighting at the same time has often been the norm in conflict situations."

But U.S. officials and analysts warn that Mr. Putin often uses diplomacy as a tool to buy time and divide his enemies.

"It's understandable that people in the West are shaken by the prospect that this horrible war could drag on for months, if not years," said Andrew Weiss, vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the co-author of "Accidental Czar," a new graphic novel-style biography of Mr. Putin. "But we should not fool ourselves into thinking that the Russians have ever negotiated in good faith about Ukraine."

"Their track record since the war started in 2014 has been pretty consistently focused on a mix of playing for time and trying to plant wedges between the U.S. and Europeans, on the one hand, and the U.S. and the Ukrainians, on the other," Mr. Weiss added, referring to the Russian military's occupation of the Crimean Peninsula of Ukraine and aggression in the country's eastern Donbas area that began that year.

The State Department spokesman, Ned Price, struck a similar note on Tuesday. "We've seen nothing to indicate that the Russians are at the present moment willing to engage in good faith negotiations," he told reporters, adding that Moscow could demonstrate sincerity by halting attacks on civilian targets.

The Biden administration increasingly finds itself having to walk a fine line in balancing messages to Ukrainian and American audiences. On the one hand, President Biden has sought to reassure Ukraine that U.S. support remains strong. On the other hand, he has been pressed to explain how a war he has said could lead to “Armageddon” might end.

Jake Sullivan, the White House national security adviser, said during a visit to Ukraine last Friday that U.S. support for Ukraine would be “unwavering and unflinching” — offering reassurance regardless of any disquiet in Congress.

“We fully intend to ensure that the resources are there as necessary and that we’ll get votes from both sides of the aisle to make that happen,” Mr. Sullivan told reporters in Kyiv, the capital, where he met with Mr. Zelensky.

Mr. Sullivan asked Mr. Zelensky about his ideas about “a just peace,” not to pressure the Ukrainian government but to get a better sense of what the end of the war might look like from a Ukrainian perspective, a Biden administration official said.

“A just peace” was a phrase used in an Oct. 11 statement by the Group of 7 nations broadly outlining terms for a potential settlement, including Ukraine’s right to “regain full control of its territory within its internationally recognized borders”; reconstruction of its country, potentially with funds from Russia; and “accountability” for Russian war crimes.

In his nightly address to his country on Monday, Mr. Zelensky listed those same conditions. Some analysts noted that Mr. Zelensky did not repeat his prior refusal to negotiate with a Russian government led by Mr. Putin.

Russian officials have insisted that they are willing to talk and have sought to cast Kyiv as the holdout. Russia’s deputy foreign minister, Andrei Rudenko, said on Tuesday that Ukraine lacked the “good will” to talk sincerely.

“This is their choice, we have always declared our readiness for such negotiations,” he said — a message that U.S. officials worry could resonate with neutral nations around the world unless clearly countered by Ukrainian leaders.

Wars often last many years. The United States fought in Afghanistan for two decades even after toppling the Taliban government, and the American military has fought multiple wars in Iraq over the decades, each one a continuation of the last. Absent a full withdrawal by one side, peace talks usually begin only when everyone is exhausted or one party sees defeat on the horizon.

Mr. Charap said that in war, “the end state is one that no one envisions being acceptable at the beginning.”

In Ukraine, the fate of Crimea is a particularly thorny question. Ukrainian leaders insist they will retake that peninsula and other land that the Russian military seized in 2014.

Mr. Putin sees Crimea as a territory of great strategic and historical importance. At the same time, Ukraine, the United States and European nations have insisted for years that Crimea’s status is nonnegotiable. Biden administration officials have repeatedly said that one of the main reasons for supporting Ukraine is to defend the core principle that borders cannot be changed by force.

“In terms of the ultimate status of Crimea, that will be something to be negotiated or discussed between the Ukrainians and the Russians, but Crimea is Ukraine,” Colin H. Kahl, the Pentagon’s under secretary for policy, said on Tuesday.

Ukrainian military advances on Crimea, though a distant prospect for now, would stoke concern in Washington about Mr. Putin’s threats to escalate the conflict.

American and European leaders see their goal for now as keeping a protracted war contained to Ukraine and deterring Mr. Putin from using a tactical nuclear warhead or other weapon of mass destruction. Officials debate whether Mr. Putin is bluffing when he hints at using nuclear arms, but some analysts believe that control of Crimea, home to Russia's Black Sea Fleet, could be a red line for the Russian leader.

American officials have said for months that they are sending private and public messages to the Kremlin to warn of severe consequences if Mr. Putin uses nuclear weapons. Mr. Sullivan has been talking to Nikolai Patrushev, his Russian counterpart, since the beginning of the war to try to avert any misunderstandings around nuclear threats, the Biden administration official said.

"I have known both Jake Sullivan and Tony Blinken for years," said Representative Ro Khanna, Democrat of California, referring to Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken. Mr. Khanna, who was among those who signed the progressives' letter to Mr. Biden, continued, "I have confidence that they understand the risks of nuclear war and the risks of escalation, and are doing everything they can to stand with Ukraine while minimizing the risks of the conflict escalating."

American officials said Mr. Zelensky's private position has been the same as his public one: He wants to see Ukraine's pre-2014 territory returned, and he is not interested in trading any of it for an end to the war.

Some European officials wonder privately whether that position is tenable, but others voice support for it.

"We hear many careless statements, like saying, 'It's not necessary to have absolute territorial integrity, we need to negotiate, we need to go for compromise so that finally we can have peace again,'" Annalena Baerbock, foreign minister of Germany, said at a policy forum last month. "I say very clearly: Such demands are naïve, and such naïve strategies already failed in 2014."

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HEADLINE	11/09 Germany takes a firmer line on China
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/09/world/europe/germany-china-investment.html
GIST	<p>The government of Chancellor Olaf Scholz blocked the sale of a semiconductor company to a Chinese-owned firm on Wednesday, as Germany seeks to toughen protection of its domestic technology and ease its dependence on China.</p> <p>Robert Habeck, Germany's economy minister, said the government had also blocked a separate investment in a German company producing critical infrastructure, which he said could not be identified because of secrecy agreements.</p> <p>Last week, Mr. Scholz visited Beijing, where he met with President Xi Jinping for discussions that focused on Russia's war in Ukraine, as well as economic ties between the two countries. China is Germany's largest trading partner, exchanging goods worth more than 245 billion euros (about \$246 billion) last year.</p> <p>But German officials have grown wary of being overdependent on China. More than a million German jobs are directly dependent on trade with China, and many more indirectly, while almost half of German manufacturing businesses relying on China for some part of their supply chain.</p> <p>There is also growing frustration in Berlin over Beijing's refusal to grant foreign companies equal treatment in China that Chinese companies enjoy in Germany and elsewhere in Europe. Especially regarding critical infrastructure and technology, there is growing concern over allowing Beijing's state-owned companies too much access.</p> <p>"Particularly in the semiconductor sector, it is important for us to protect the technological and economic sovereignty of Germany and Europe," Mr. Habeck told reporters on Wednesday. "Of course, Germany is and will remain an open investment location, but we are not naïve, either."</p>

Mr. Habeck named Elmos Semiconductor, based in Dortmund, as one of the companies that had been denied approval for foreign investment.

Elmos announced nearly a year ago that it had planned to spin off its wafer fabrication facility, which produces chips mainly used in the auto industry, into a separate entity that was to be acquired by Silex Microsystems, a Swedish firm wholly owned by a Chinese company.

From the outset, the €85 million deal was subject to government approval because it involved a foreign firm buying a German company.

On Wednesday, Elmos issued a statement saying that it regretted the government's decision, and that the deal would have strengthened chip production in Germany. It said it would "analyze the decision" and "decide whether to take legal action."

Mr. Habeck declined to name the second company whose sale was blocked, noting that the firm's internal secrecy agreements prevented him from doing so. But the German business daily Handelsblatt reported that it involved ERS Electronic, a company focused on cooling technology based in Bavaria.

A spokeswoman for ERS said the company had discussed "an investment by a Chinese private equity firm," but added that it had not yet received any information from the government on a decision.

Last week, before leaving for Beijing, Mr. Scholz overruled the recommendation of six of his ministries and both domestic and foreign intelligence chiefs to allow Cosco, a Chinese state-owned shipping company, to buy a stake of up to 25 percent in a container-handling terminal in Hamburg, Germany's most important port.

Cosco originally sought to acquire a 35 percent stake, but that was scaled back after widespread political and public outcry over security concerns.

Mr. Scholz traveled to China with a delegation of 12 German business leaders, even as he has sought to encourage German firms to diversify their trade ties in Asia. He and Mr. Habeck will travel to Singapore next week to take part in a wider Asian business conference.

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HEADLINE	11/09 Putin's top security official visits Iran
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/09/world/europe/putin-patrushev-russia-iran.html
GIST	<p>The Kremlin's top security adviser arrived in Tehran late Tuesday amid growing signs that advanced Iranian weapons are being used on Ukrainian battlefields.</p> <p>Russian and Iranian state news agencies described a visit by Nikolai Patrushev, the head of Russia's National Security Council, as a routine trip to discuss joint projects.</p> <p>"In Tehran, Patrushev will hold regular Russian-Iranian security consultations," read a report by Russia's state-run TASS news agency.</p> <p>Mr. Patrushev, a hardline ally of President Vladimir V. Putin, is the latest senior Russian official to visit Iran since the start of the war. His visit comes as Western and Ukrainian officials warn that Russia is trying to secure Iranian precision-guided missiles and drones to lift its flagging military fortunes in Ukraine.</p> <p>The prolonged war has decimated Russia's weapon stocks, forcing it to turn to its few remaining allies, such as Iran and North Korea, to try countering the flood of Western military hardware to Ukraine, these officials said. Last week, the Pentagon claimed that North Korea is covertly supplying a "significant number" of artillery shells to Russia. North Korea has denied the reports.</p>

	<p>For its part, Iran has indicated that it planned to sell ballistic missiles to Russia. It has also denied selling attack drones since the start of the war, though the wreckage of them has now been found many times in Ukraine, and social media accounts associated with the Iranian security services have boasted of their use there.</p> <p>Ukrainian officials claim that advanced Western air-defense systems have allowed them to partly neutralize Russian rockets and drones, but they warn that they have little defense against Iranian ballistic missiles.</p> <p>Maj. Gen. Kyrylo Budanov, head of Ukraine’s defense intelligence directorate, has said delivery of Iranian missiles could happen by the end of November.</p> <p>“It’s a serious threat because Iranian missiles, unlike Russian ones, are quite high-precision, very high-speed, and those features have been battle-proven,” he said in a recent interview with the War Zone, an online publication focused on military matters.</p> <p>Iranian weapons have played a large role in Tehran’s proxy conflicts in Yemen and Syria, raising fears that its growing involvement in Ukraine could heighten tensions with Washington.</p> <p>“When we see Iranian ballistic missiles being employed on the battlefield in Ukraine, we will do what we can to illuminate that,” a Pentagon spokesman, Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder, said on Tuesday.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/09 Coldest morning of season: more to come
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/weather/coldest-morning-of-the-season-sea-tac-hit-freezing-for-the-first-time-and-olympia-set-a-new-daily-record/281-bbd72f0c-78ca-4ff3-936b-7e874a431032
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — It is that time of the year when the temperatures continually grow cooler, the daylight gets shorter, and the sun angle becomes lower.</p> <p>Wednesday morning showcased just how efficiently temperatures can fall on a clear, calm fall night. It was the coldest morning of the season for many areas in western Washington with temperatures Wednesday morning falling into the 20s and lower 30s around Puget Sound.</p> <p>The clear skies and light winds allow temperatures to plummet overnight Tuesday and most folks woke up Wednesday morning to the coldest temperatures of the season.</p> <p>Sea-Tac hit the 32-degree mark for the first freeze of the season and the first freeze since April 13 of this year (average last freeze is typically around March 7). Wednesday morning's freezing low temperature is ahead of the seasonal average. Typically, Sea-Tac records its first freezing temperature around November 17.</p> <p>Seattle wasn't the only town making waves this morning.</p> <p>Both Olympia and Shelton set new daily record low temperatures for November 9. Olympia fell to 21 degrees Wednesday morning, which is a new daily record low temperature. The previous record was 22 set back in 2020. Shelton fell to 22 degrees, beating the old record of 23 set back in 2020.</p> <p>While the temperature at Sea-Tac was cold and ahead of the average first freeze date, it was far from a record low for this date. The record low for November 9 is 27 set back in 1948.</p> <p>Get used to the chilly temperatures. The forecast calls for below-average temperatures to stick around with overnight lows falling nearly 10 degrees below average over the next several mornings.</p>

	There's the possibility of additional freezes over the next couple of nights not only at Sea-Tac but around Puget Sound. Make sure you're protecting the sensitive vegetation and pets, bundle the kiddos up before they head to school, and you want to dress in layers too especially if you commute by bike.
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HEADLINE	11/09 Redfin slashes more jobs workforce layoffs
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/money/markets/real-estate/redfin-layoffs-shutter-redfinnow/281-e0f734d8-f58b-4dca-a718-afee33d8410f
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — Online real estate broker Redfin is cutting 862 employees and shutting down its instant-cash-offer subsidiary RedfinNow, another casualty of two-decade-high interest rates stoked by the Federal Reserve's fight against inflation.</p> <p>The job cuts amount to 13% of Redfin's workforce, the company announced in a regulatory filing. Redfin also laid off 470 employees in June, blaming slowing home sales.</p> <p>Redfin has slashed more than a quarter of its workforce since April 2022 on the assumption that the housing downturn will last “at least through 2023,” it said in the filing.</p> <p>The average U.S. long-term mortgage rate is hovering around 7%, partially a result of the Fed raising rates six times this year as it tries to stem four-decade high inflation. Fed officials have boosted their benchmark lending rate by three-quarters of a point at its last four meetings, sowing fears that its heavy-handed policy could tip the U.S. into a recession.</p> <p>More rate hikes are expected into next year, though inflation data coming from the government Thursday could play into the Fed's strategy.</p> <p>Though the government recently estimated that the broader U.S. economy returned to growth last quarter, the Fed's actions have chilled a once red-hot housing market.</p> <p>Home sales have slowed for eight straight months as would-be first-time homebuyers pull out of the market, with borrowing costs greatly diminishing their options and inflation already taking a bite out of their incomes. Homeowners looking to upgrade are also waiting out the interest rate crest, not wanting to jump into a higher rate on their next mortgage.</p> <p>In its filing, Redfin said it expected to incur charges of up to \$23 million for the layoffs and wind down, most of those related to benefits and severance compensation related to the layoffs.</p> <p>Redfin is writing down \$18 million worth of inventory associated with RedfinNow, a result of homes losing their value since being purchased earlier this year. Redfin said it will continue to purchase homes under contract and renovate them and sell them quickly.</p> <p>The Seattle company hopes to reduce its RedfinNow inventory to about \$85 million worth of homes by the end of January 2023. It currently has about \$265 million worth of homes through RedfinNow, with another \$92 million under contract.</p> <p>RedfinNow made sellers quick cash offers for their homes without having to list them.</p> <p>Shares of Redfin tumbled more than 8% in morning trading. They have lost about 90% of their value this year and traded close to \$100 each less than two years ago.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/09 Tech layoffs impact to western Washington
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SOURCE	<p>https://komonews.com/news/local/tech-layoffs-workers-western-washington-seattle-meta-facebook-redfin-workforce-employee-corporate-downtown-work-company-salary-job-interview-advice-jobseeker-cycle-industry#</p> <p>https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/marketing-economic-experts-weigh-meta-tech-layoffs/J4NJNYDZN5AA5JEHGMUQT32F2Y/</p>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE, Wash. — With multiple companies in the tech industry laying off workers, it's a tough time to be in the tech sector.</p> <p>Meta, the parent company of Facebook, and Redfin announced the layoff of 13% of their workforces this week. They're not the only companies laying people off or putting a freeze on corporate hiring either.</p> <p>Data from the Downtown Seattle Association (DSA) shows downturn in a return to office. The return of workers to downtown fell in September, after showing strong surges above 40% in June, July and August. Still, James Sido, at DSA, said that percentage is outpacing downtown San Francisco and downtown Los Angeles.</p> <p>This latest round of layoffs, on top of others in western Washington, is hitting workers hard.</p> <p>"Most companies are not going to be doing any significant hiring this year," said Steven Ward, who is all too familiar with getting laid off in the fourth quarter of the year. He was one of thousands laid off from Expedia Group just before Christmas in 2019.</p> <p>"Pretty unfortunate timing, because the whole economy just stopped so finding a job was somewhat of a challenge," said Ward.</p> <p>Ward, an IT program manager, finally landed his full-time position at Google after more than two years of temporary work, job searches, and interviews.</p> <p>"Interviews? In those almost three years, 100, 100+. A lot," Ward said.</p> <p>"I've had a couple of really good interviews some promising applications but unfortunately didn't go very far," said Mike Taylor, a recently laid-off Seattle tech worker, who is now 30 days into his job search.</p> <p>"A lot of these early interviews, I've had to end at the salary expectations," said Taylor. "They're expecting senior qualified individuals for these different positions at their company and like I said, tech is kind of a fresh industry they're bringing in people at entry level job wages."</p> <p>It's common for small, start-up techs to offer perks to land employees, but Taylor's looking for more stability. That may be coming a bit down the road for the tech sector, which is coping with consumers spending less, continued supply chain issues, and higher interest rates all hitting the bottom line.</p> <p>After emerging from more than two years of difficult times, Ward's advice includes using all of your contacts to pound the pavement, plus professional help with your resume and solid preparation for interviews.</p> <p>"Take a breath. Relax, await. The tech industry is not going away. We're in a little bit of a bump right now but it's going to come back," said Ward.</p> <p>When the tech industry will rebound, that's a worry, not only for today's jobseekers, but for future generations.</p> <p>Some worry with tech industry's upswing during the pandemic, followed by this downturn, young people won't enter the tech sector at all, which could end up hurting even more down the road.</p>

SEATTLE — [Meta announced Wednesday they would be laying off 11,000 employees as a response to spending issues from the pandemic](#). But Meta isn't the only tech giant laying people off; both Twitter and Microsoft have also let go of employees in recent weeks. Even Amazon is currently under a hiring freeze due to concern about the future of the economy.

Jeff Shulman is a marketing professor at the University of Washington. He believes tech layoffs like these could have a significant impact in the Seattle area.

"Amazon has been bringing people to Seattle from all over the world for years; and now to hit pause, that is going to have an effect not just in the tech community, but throughout the Pacific Northwest," said Shulman.

He also says that another problem this could create is a lack of confidence in the market. He says if people have less confidence in the market, the less money people will spend, meaning less money is flowing throughout the local economy.

"Every time they feel confident to spend money, that's an income for somebody else. And when people lack that confidence, it could be quite problematic," said Shulman.

"And this (has) impacts for the tax base. It has impacts for every business here in the region," said Shulman.

People KIRO 7 spoke to say because of the recent headlines on tech layoffs, they want to start paying attention to their own money habits.

"But hearing these headlines, it makes me start to think that I probably should start to think about that a little bit," said Mark Fitzgerald.

Economic experts KIRO 7 spoke with argue these tech layoffs aren't a sign that a recession is on the horizon.

"I would argue that (these) actions are a response to the efforts of the central bank. Some people will argue that those efforts are actually bringing the economy to the recession," Seattle University economics professor Vlad Dashkeev said.

Dashkeev says companies like Amazon may be on hiring freezes for certain jobs, but says they would still hire for positions of need. He also feels what these tech companies produce is also a sign a recession isn't necessarily going to happen.

"They are still producing very important software, with very important IT services that are really needed all through the economy," said Dashkeev.

With uncertainty about the future, people are still hoping for the best.

"I think we've heard that the jobs market is really strong. So, that's kind of kept people confident, I guess, in a way," said Fitzgerald.

KIRO 7 has reached out to Meta on exactly how many employees in the Pacific Northwest were laid off. Once they respond, this story will be updated.

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SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/local/ingraham-high-school-shooting-no-school-resource-officers-seattle-public-schools-gunman-crime-north-seattle-police#
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — The shooting death of a north Seattle student is reigniting conversations about whether students and their families would feel safer if Seattle Public Schools (SPS) brought school resource officers (SRO) back to campuses.</p> <p>People dropped off flowers and knelt in prayer Thursday for the teen shot and killed inside Ingraham High School Tuesday. “It’s just such a tragedy. I can’t make any sense of it. And I hate that it’s becoming part of our society,” said Bonnie Morris of Seattle.</p> <p>Some students who heard the gunfire Tuesday are now demanding answers and security changes at Seattle schools. “There should be metal detectors or something at this point,” said senior Amerino Sennell.</p> <p>“Students are making demands because the adults in our world aren’t making the changes that they need to feel safe,” said Stephanie Kiracofe, who left flowers at the teen’s memorial Wednesday.</p> <p>At a press conference Tuesday, hours after the deadly shooting at Ingraham High School, Seattle Chief of Police Adrian Diaz acknowledged there were no SROs on campus at the time of the tragedy.</p> <p>“Right now, we do not have school resource officers in the schools,” Diaz said Tuesday. “We’ve also been really short-staffed. Being that we’re short-staffed, we really have to make sure that we’re dedicated to 911 responses.”</p> <p>On Wednesday, SPD’s African American Community Advisory Council President Victoria Beach demanded the district look at reinstating SROs. She said the presence could make people think twice about bringing a weapon onto campus.</p> <p>“I don’t know if the outcome would’ve been different yesterday, we’ll never know. But they need to be back in schools. Our kids deserve to have protection,” she said.</p> <p>Until June 2020, there were four Seattle Police Department staff assigned to four SPS middle schools. That changed after the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis.</p> <p>At the time, former SPS Superintendent Denise Juneau sent the following message to the SPS community that read, in part: “In light of the current national events: the perpetuation of systemic racism, the murders of Black people by police officers across our country, the violence displayed by some law enforcement officers here in Seattle, a resolution will be put forth by the School Board to reevaluate our relationship with the Seattle Police Department and to enact a district-wide one-year suspension of placing SEOs and the SRO in our schools.”</p> <p>In a statement Wednesday, a district spokesperson said that “while there may be consideration of the presence of Seattle Police and/or School Emphasis Officers there are no formal discussions underway.”</p> <p>“We will continue to work with the students and faculty, the teachers and administrators, on what true collaboration and community-based solutions look like, and that’s why some of the community-based organizations that are here doing this important work will look like,” Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell said at Tuesday’s press conference. “So, school resource officer, the officers around the campus interfacing with the students, all of those are discussions we’ll continue to have, and hopefully, the solutions will result in a better Seattle and a better school district.”</p> <p>Looking ahead at future safety measures, Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell said the city has more work to do to find solutions.</p> <p>“So, school resource officer, the officers around the campus interfacing with the students, all of those are discussions we’ll continue to have and hopefully the solutions will result in a better Seattle and a better school district,” Harrell stated.</p>

	Bellevue also got rid of its SROs but just this fall added a new program to help build relationships between kids and law enforcement.
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HEADLINE	11/09 DOL free WA IDs Spokane homeless camp
SOURCE	https://www.krem.com/article/news/local/department-of-licensing-free-state-ids-i-90-homeless-camp/293-62e86f58-73c2-4348-a9ba-34ed8a2b23a4
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash. — The Department of Licensing is at the homeless encampment by I-90 and Freya issuing state IDs and driver licenses.</p> <p>Carlos Loera got his new state ID. He has been homeless for over seven years.</p> <p>Loera says it's taken him until now to get any form of ID.</p> <p>"I was getting complications from other side at getting my birth certificate, so it just took long. But, they were over here, they were able to just look up my information just to get my ID," said Loera.</p> <p>Loera is one of 267 people that got their ID in the past month. He now looks forward to using his ID to get a job.</p> <p>"I haven't had an ID for about seven years now cause I just came from California and I heard they were giving IDs over here," Loera said. "So, I came in and they helped me really good. Very happy. I'm able to get a job, I'm able to vote now."</p> <p>DOL says they extended the program two extra weeks because of demand.</p> <p>"It's been a great reception. We've seen many tears, people are so happy. We just met one individual who didn't have an ID for over 10 years and they got their ID card here," said Sandra Najera, the community outreach manager for the Department of Licensing.</p> <p>The Washington State Department of Transportation has completed the census at the homeless encampment near I-90 and Freya. 465 people have badges to enter the camp and no new people will be allowed in.</p> <p>The Department of Licensing says that they're able to give out state IDs and driver licenses for free from funds they have from the Department of Commerce and the Empire Health Foundation.</p> <p>Jewels Helping Hands, the organization that runs the homeless encampment, says they have been shuttling in people that live at the Trent Shelter and at Union Gospel Mission to ID services.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/09 Russia orders retreat from Kherson
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/09/world/europe/ukraine-russia-kherson-retreat.html
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine — The Kremlin on Wednesday announced a retreat of Russian forces from the strategically important city of Kherson in southern Ukraine, a concession to military reality eight months after capturing the area, and one of the most significant reversals of President Vladimir V. Putin's war effort.</p> <p>The withdrawal order came from Russia's defense minister, Sergei K. Shoigu, in a meeting with top military leaders that was broadcast on Russian state television, after Gen. Sergei V. Surovikin, Moscow's commander in Ukraine, explained that heavy shelling by advancing Ukrainian forces had made the Russian position west of the Dnipro River, where Kherson is, untenable.</p>

“Go ahead with the pullout of troops and take all measures to ensure safe transfer of troops, weapons and equipment to the other bank of the Dnipro River,” Mr. Shoigu said.

Mr. Putin was not present at the meeting, distancing him from both an embarrassing defeat and a decision to retreat that, Kremlin analysts say, only he could have made.

By day’s end there was strong evidence that Russians were withdrawing from the territory they held west of the river, Ukrainian officials said, as Ukrainian soldiers entered some frontline villages that had been under Russian control in the morning.

Wary of a possible ruse meant to lure Ukrainian troops into a trap, the officials cautioned that they were not yet sure about the status of Russian forces within the city, but as the day went on they grew more confident that the pullback was real.

“We have signs they are pulling out,” moving heavy equipment first and then infantry, said Roman Kostenko, a Ukrainian army colonel and chairman of the defense and intelligence committee in Parliament. “They blew up bridges that would have allowed our forces to advance. We see them leaving population centers, but in some they leave soldiers behind to cover their movements.”

The announced retreat is one of the most significant setbacks for Russia in the war Mr. Putin started in February. Kherson, an important port and industrial city seized during the early days of the war, has been a strategic and symbolic prize of the invasion — the only regional capital Russia captured. It gave Moscow an important foothold west of the Dnipro, from where it expanded and which it hoped to use as a base to push farther west, all the way to [the critical port city of Odesa](#).

News of the withdrawal drew anguished and angry responses from some prominent Russian hawks, while others described it as a sensible, tactical retreat to a more defensible front.

“The decision is shocking to thousands and millions of people who are fighting for Russia, dying for Russia, believe in Russia and share the beliefs of the Russian world,” wrote Yuri Kotyonok, an influential military blogger.

Boris Rozhin, a Russian military analyst, called the retreat the Russian Federation’s “most serious military defeat since 1991,” when it formed. In [a Telegram post](#), he wrote, “If there won’t be any upcoming successes with major towns captured and no advancement during the winter offensive, the series of military setbacks would accumulate a much greater internal discontent than sanctions.”

But Tatiana Stanovaya, a Russian analyst who studies Mr. Putin for her political analysis firm R.Politik, said in a phone interview: “This just confirms, in my view, how pragmatic Putin is. He’s not as crazy as we thought.”

The impact of the Russian move on any potential peace talks was unclear. President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine and his top aides conveyed this week that, if anything, their position has hardened — that Russia must first leave Ukraine completely, and that it must pay war reparations — and that, in any case, Moscow isn’t interested in negotiations.

President Biden said at a White House news conference on Wednesday, “It remains to be seen whether Ukraine is willing to compromise.” He later insisted that it was up to the Ukrainians whether to enter talks or make concessions.

“They’re going to both lick their wounds, decide what they’re going to do over the winter and decide whether or not they’re going to compromise,” he said.

On Kherson, Mr. Biden said he had expected a Russian retreat. “It’s evidence of the fact that they have some real problems, the Russian military,” he said.

Other U.S. officials said it was not entirely clear that Moscow was abandoning the west bank of the Dnipro, and might not be clear for a few days. But the officials, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to address the matter publicly, said it would make sense to withdraw troops that were increasingly cut off, preserving them to fight another day.

Mr. Shoigu's evidently choreographed meeting, where both he and General Surovikin said they were motivated by concern for the troops, appeared aimed at softening the blow for a domestic audience. Russians have seen increasing reports of a badly managed war, a chaotic draft that prompted widespread protests, heavy casualties, and troops lacking training and equipment who were used as cannon fodder. At the same time, pro-war commenters have criticized the Kremlin for not waging a more aggressive, brutal fight.

The occupation forces had telegraphed a possible pullback for weeks, making statements about the difficult position of troops in Kherson and ordering both the Kremlin-appointed regional government and the remaining civilians to flee eastward. The Ukrainian military was skeptical, reporting just days ago that 40,000 Russian troops were west of the river, digging in to fight for the city.

Moscow's apparent decision to pull back allows an orderly withdrawal rather than the kind of sudden collapse and panicked retreat its forces endured from the northeastern Kharkiv region in September, leaving behind a treasure trove of weapons and other equipment that the Ukrainians could use.

"There is a lot of joy in the media space today, and it is clear why, but our emotions must be restrained — always during war," Mr. Zelensky said Wednesday in his nightly address. He added, "When you are fighting, you must understand that every step is always resistance from the enemy, it is always the loss of the lives of our heroes."

Oleksiy Arestovych, an adviser to Mr. Zelensky, said retreat was less a choice for the Russians than an inevitability, as Ukraine's forces "methodically gnawed through the enemy's defenses."

The news that Russia was withdrawing was greeted with cautious jubilation by some local residents, who have suffered under harsh Russian rule with dwindling food, electricity and water. In Kherson, Valentyn, 50, said in a text message exchange that he awoke Wednesday to booming explosions — nothing unusual — but then "it became eerily quiet."

"Russians are escaping; the city is almost empty," said Valentyn, who asked that his last name be withheld for his safety. "In many places there's no light and no water."

He added: "The atmosphere is tense, we stay at home and wait. For our forces to enter."

Dudchany, a village north of the city, "was divided by the front line" for a month, said Alla Torchanska, the village leader. Caught in the combat zone, residents were harassed by Russian troops who, she said, "would come every now and then, detain and interrogate people, check their phones, and take away the valuable things."

"Today," Ms. Torchanska said, "the Ukrainian forces finally took the entire village under their control. It's such a blessing. Everyone feels festive."

The grinding Ukrainian offensive has whittled down the Russian-held pocket west of the Dnipro, farm by farm and town by town, closing in on the largely evacuated city and destroying bridges the Russians used to reinforce and resupply their troops. Western intelligence officials have said that Mr. Putin rejected earlier requests by his military to abandon the city.

But people who know Mr. Putin say he still believes he can win a war he has cast as a broader conflict with the United States and its allies, convinced that the West and Ukraine will be unwilling or unable to pay the price for as long as Russia will.

	<p>The deputy head of the Russian occupation government in the broader Kherson region, Kyrylo Stremousov, who had been outspoken about Russia's deteriorating military situation, died in a car accident, the regional chief, Volodymyr Saldo, said on Wednesday.</p> <p>Some Ukrainians remained cautious in their assessment of Russian actions. Residents and Ukrainian officials have reported Russian soldiers changing into civilian clothes and taking over homes in Kherson city and the surrounding towns and villages, possible signs of planned ambushes. Russians have laid mines and destroyed roads to slow advancing Ukrainian forces.</p> <p>"We don't know how far we will move tomorrow," said Colonel Kostenko, the Ukrainian lawmaker.</p> <p>Ukrainian officials have also warned that if the Russians do abandon Kherson, they could then devastate it with artillery from across the river, or with flooding by breaching the Kakhovka hydroelectric dam upstream. Russians and Ukrainians have accused each other of plotting to attack the dam, the last road link Russians have across the Dnipro.</p> <p>Retaking the west bank of the Dnipro could allow Ukrainian forces to interrupt the primary source of fresh water for the Russian-occupied Crimean Peninsula, putting them within artillery range of a canal linking the river to the peninsula. Ukraine had cut the flow of water after Russia's illegal seizure of Crimea in 2014, and the Russians' offensive earlier this year allowed them to restart it.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/10 Skepticism abounds over Russia retreat
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/11/10/world/ukraine-war-news-russia-updates#zelensky-us-officials-express-skepticism-over-russian-decision-on-kherson
GIST	<p>President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine and U.S. officials have expressed skepticism at Russia's decision to order troops to retreat from the strategically important city of Kherson and said they would monitor movements in the coming days.</p> <p>"There is a lot of joy in the media space today, and it is clear why," Mr. Zelensky said in his overnight address late Wednesday. "But our emotions must be restrained," he added. "The enemy does not bring us gifts."</p> <p>A retreat from the city of Kherson would be a major victory for Ukraine, which has long sought to recapture it and push Russian troops from the western bank of the Dnipro River. It is the only regional capital to fall to Russian forces since they invaded in February, and the withdrawal would be a humiliating rout for President Vladimir V. Putin.</p> <p>Sergei K. Shoigu, Russia's defense minister, announced the decision on Wednesday in a televised meeting with the military's top brass. Gen. Sergei Surovikin, the commander for Russia's forces in Ukraine, told Mr. Shoigu said that a withdrawal would "preserve lives of servicemen and combat readiness of forces."</p> <p>The reactions from Washington and Kyiv, Ukraine's capital, cautioned that it was too soon to tell how widespread the withdrawal was and what Russia's intentions were.</p> <p>President Biden, during a news conference at the White House, said that the order was "evidence of the fact that they have some real problems, the Russian military."</p> <p>A Biden official, speaking anonymously because he was not authorized to speak publicly, said that in pulling back across the river, Russia was trying to preserve its forces — and their capability to fight another day.</p> <p>Ukraine has warned that Russia might try to feign a retreat in hopes of drawing Ukraine into urban combat. The military had been tracking signs of a Russian retreat through Wednesday but was not convinced that the Russian military intended to fully withdraw from Kherson City and the surrounding</p>

	<p>Russian bridgehead on the western bank of the Dnipro River, according to Roman Kostenko, a colonel in the army and chairman of the defense and intelligence committee in Ukraine's Parliament.</p> <p>By Wednesday evening, Ukrainian soldiers had entered some frontline villages that had been under Russian control before Moscow's forces withdrew earlier in the day, Colonel Kostenko said in a telephone interview. Informants for the Ukrainian Army were reporting that Russian soldiers were leaving from towns and villages away from the front, he said.</p> <p>Ukrainian intelligence agencies were working to assess Russia's movements, he said, adding that the Russian announcement could be misdirection.</p> <p>Mykhailo Podolyak, a senior adviser to Mr. Zelensky, was more circumspect and said the country was not relying on "staged TV statements" from the Russians. "Actions speak louder than words," he wrote on Twitter. "We see no signs that Russia is leaving Kherson without a fight."</p>
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HEADLINE	11/10 Putin silent on Kherson withdrawal order
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/11/10/world/ukraine-war-news-russia-updates#putin-ukraine-russia-kherson
GIST	<p>Many of the Russian cheerleaders of the invasion of Ukraine on Wednesday cast the defense minister's order to withdraw from Kherson City as a monumental defeat — Moscow's most devastating, according to one of them, since the fall of the Soviet Union.</p> <p>The announced retreat crystallized the failures of President Vladimir V. Putin's war effort. It would be a humiliating loss of the largest Ukrainian city that Russia had seized in its nine-month invasion, coming just weeks after Mr. Putin declared it to be an irrevocable part of Russia in a bombastic celebration on Red Square.</p> <p>But analysts who follow Mr. Putin closely saw the order as a reminder of Mr. Putin's willingness to make tactical concessions in what he sees as a large-scale conflict with the West that, according to people who know him, he believes he can still win.</p> <p>"This just confirms, in my view, how pragmatic Putin is," Tatiana Stanovaya, an analyst who studies Mr. Putin for her political analysis firm R.Politik, said in a phone interview. "He's not as crazy as we thought."</p> <p>Mr. Putin himself was silent on the matter, allowing his officials to do the talking. Instead, Mr. Putin toured a neurological hospital and spoke at an event commemorating the 75th anniversary of Russia's national public health institute, praising it for fighting the coronavirus and helping care for "our heroes" in Ukraine.</p> <p>The announced retreat came a week after Mr. Putin agreed to rejoin the agreement allowing the shipment of Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea, reversing course after Russia threatened to block it in retaliation for a drone attack on the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet in Crimea that it attributed to Ukraine, but which Kyiv denied.</p> <p>And it comes as people close to the Kremlin are increasingly speculating about the possibility of a cease-fire agreement with Ukraine and highlighting reports in the Western news media that Washington was encouraging Kyiv to be open to talks.</p> <p>"There's a certain logic here," Andrei Kortunov, director general of the Russian International Affairs Council, a research organization close to the Russian government, said of the order to retreat from the west bank of the Dnipro River.</p>

By shifting to the river's more defensible east bank, Mr. Kortunov said, the Russian military was seeking to enable what he described as the Kremlin's top near-term priority: a "stabilization, a fixation" of the front line.

But Konrad Muzyka, a military analyst and the director of Rochan Consulting, based in Gdansk, Poland, said the motives for the announcement were puzzling. "From a military point of view, such an announcement doesn't make sense, unless there is a second bottom to the story," he said in a telephone interview on Wednesday.

In a retreat, a military would typically seek to maintain the appearance of a strong defense while withdrawing in secret. Yet the Russian military had also publicly announced retreats from north of the capital, Kyiv, in the spring and the northeastern Kharkiv region in late summer, after being defeated by Ukrainian troops.

"You have to give it to them," Mr. Muzyka said. "They are consistent."

Militant rhetoric was emanating from Moscow just weeks ago, when the Kremlin's annexation of four Ukrainian regions it only partly controls — including the Kherson region — appeared to signal a major escalation of the war and possibly a prelude to the use of nuclear weapons.

But since then, Mr. Putin has dialed back his nuclear rhetoric, and on Wednesday some of Russia's most influential pro-war voices voiced support for the Kherson withdrawal.

Ramzan Kadyrov, the strongman ruler of the Russian republic of Chechnya, described it as a "difficult but right choice between senseless sacrifices for the sake of high-profile statements and saving the priceless lives of soldiers."

Yevgeny Prigozhin, the business magnate who runs the private army known as the Wagner Group, said it was now important "not to agonize, not to writhe in paranoia, but to draw conclusions and work on mistakes."

Those statements were a sign that the Kremlin had carefully laid the propaganda groundwork for the withdrawal, seeking to avoid the sort of internecine sniping that followed Russia's chaotic retreats earlier this fall in eastern and northern Ukraine.

Still, it did not silence the hawks' outrage entirely. One pro-Kremlin analyst, Sergei Markov, described the retreat as "Russia's biggest geopolitical defeat since the moment of the collapse of the U.S.S.R."

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HEADLINE	11/09 Tacoma officers added to 'Brady list'
SOURCE	https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/crime/article268480792.html
GIST	<p>The Pierce County Prosecuting Attorney's Office added the three Tacoma police officers charged in the March 2020 killing of Manuel Ellis to a list of law enforcement with credibility issues this month, according to a spokesperson.</p> <p>The prosecutor's Potential Impeachment evidence files, commonly known as Brady material, for officers Christopher Burbank, Matthew Collins and Timothy Rankine include charging documents filed by the state Attorney General's Office in May 2021, which cite video and witness accounts of the officers beating Ellis, who did not fight back, prior to his death from a lack of oxygen. The officers described Ellis as the aggressor in comments at the scene and during their first interviews with Pierce County Sheriff's detectives days later.</p> <p>Those charging documents will now be provided to defense attorneys if any of the officers are used as a witness in a criminal trial.</p>

Being included on the list can make it difficult for an officer to move to another department because state law requires agencies to consult prosecuting attorney's offices about lateral hires as a part of background checks, according to former attorney and Washington Coalition for Police Accountability spokesperson Leslie Cushman.

Cushman said there is a stigma among law enforcement about being labeled a "Brady officer," which references a 1963 Supreme Court decision that prosecutors can't withhold material evidence from defendants.

"It doesn't end their career," Cushman told The News Tribune. "They can keep on working and they still get promotions, but they are not reliable in court."

Burbank and Collins face charges of second-degree murder and first-degree manslaughter. Rankine, who responded to the incident with Ellis as backup, is charged with first-degree manslaughter. All three have pleaded not guilty and are scheduled to face trial in late January.

The officers have remained on paid leave since they were charged. Police Chief Avery Moore has indicated he won't decide whether to fire the officers until after their trial.

The Washington State Patrol took over the investigation of Ellis' killing following the revelation that a Pierce County deputy had helped restrain him. The state Attorney General's Office conducted additional investigation and decided to charge the officers after the Pierce County Prosecuting Attorney's Office withdrew from the case.

Elected Prosecuting Attorney Mary Robnett is not a part of the committee that decided to add the officers to its so-called Brady list, according to spokesperson Adam Faber. She has yet to weigh on those decisions since her election in 2018.

The Potential Impeachment committee, which has been formalized during Robnett's tenure, is comprised of both criminal and civil deputy prosecuting attorneys, according to Faber.

There are three primary ways the conduct of an officer or recurring law enforcement witness comes before the committee: a referral from an officer's own agency, a complaint from a prosecutor or news reports about potential misconduct.

The committee then asks a referred officer's agency for files about their conduct, Faber said.

The committee has a standing monthly meeting to make Potential Impeachment list decisions, according to Faber. The group typically comes to a consensus after prosecutors share their opinions.

A spokesperson for the Tacoma Police Department did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

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HEADLINE	11/09 CDC links listeria outbreak: meats, cheese
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/09/us/listeria-outbreak-us.html
GIST	<p>One person has died and 13 have been hospitalized in a listeria outbreak across six states that most likely was caused by contaminated deli meat and cheese, federal health officials said Wednesday.</p> <p>The outbreak sickened at least 16 people from April 17, 2021, to Sept. 29, 2022, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: three in Maryland, where the person who died resided; seven in New York; two people each in Illinois and Massachusetts; and one each in New Jersey and California.</p> <p>There may have been more recent cases, but it typically takes three or four weeks to determine if an illness is tied to an outbreak. The true number of sick people is most likely higher, and the outbreak "may not be limited to the states with known illnesses," the agency said in a news release.</p>

The flulike symptoms of listeriosis — fever, vomiting and diarrhea — most often affect older adults, immune-compromised individuals and pregnant women, who can pass it on to their fetuses.

Symptoms usually start within two weeks after eating contaminated food, including meat, unpasteurized milk, raw vegetables and certain processed items like hot dogs and deli meats, according to the Mayo Clinic. The listeria bacteria can be found in soil, water and animal feces.

The agency said that one person got sick during their pregnancy, which resulted in pregnancy loss. Of the 13 people who shared information about their ethnicity to the agency, 11 are of Eastern European background or speak Russian. They range in age from 38 to 92, the agency said.

Pregnant women are 10 times more likely than other people to become infected, according to the CDC.

State and local public health officials believe that contaminated deli meat and cheese are the root of the outbreak. Of the seven people who got sick in New York, five bought sliced deli meat or cheese from at least one NetCost Market, a grocery store chain. However, the agency said “investigators do not believe that NetCost Market delis are the only source of illnesses because some sick people in the outbreak did not shop at a NetCost Market.”

The grocery store temporarily closed the deli in one of its Brooklyn stores after New York City health officials notified them about the sampling results. The NetCost market reopened after a “deep cleaning” and after “further environmental testing did not identify listeria,” the agency said.

NetCost Market did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment Wednesday night.

In 2021, health officials in New York found the outbreak strain of listeria in several samples, including sliced salami purchased by a sick person from a NetCost Market deli on Staten Island and a NetCost Market deli in Brooklyn, where several open packages of mortadella and ham contained listeria.

The sick people from other states purchased deli meats or cheeses from other delis, the agency said.

The CDC advised people at higher risk of severe listeria illness “to not eat meat or cheese from any deli counter,” unless it is reheated to an internal temperature of 165 degrees or until steaming hot.

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HEADLINE	11/09 School officials, politicians eye gun control
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/seattle-school-officials-politicians-call-for-gun-control-after-ingraham-shooting/
GIST	<p>Seattle school district officials and elected leaders are calling for increased safety measures and stronger gun control laws after a student was shot and killed in a Seattle public school for the first time in nearly 30 years.</p> <p>A 14-year-old allegedly smuggled a gun into school then shot another student in what Seattle Public Schools Superintendent Brent Jones called a “targeted attack” in a hallway at Ingraham High School Tuesday morning. The 14-year-old and another student, 15, have been arrested. Now, officials want safety improvements, enhanced gun control and other interventions.</p> <p>Jones announced a new safety initiative at Wednesday night’s regular School Board meeting to address short- and long-term needs in school buildings.</p> <p>And Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell called for the state to lift a law prohibiting cities from implementing their own gun policies.</p>

Seattle Public Schools, the largest district in the state with 106 schools, doesn't have the capacity to create a tailored safety plan for each school, Jones said. But there are some standards and practices that the district can adopt.

The district will assemble a threat and community action team, with advice from the mayor and police chief, to assess what SPS can do to improve safety at school buildings, Jones said. The district will also launch a child well-being council led by nurses, psychologists and other mental health experts.

Classes at Ingraham have been canceled for the rest of the week. A health team will be at Ingraham to provide support for students when they return to school Monday, Jones said.

"As a leader of this district, I never want our Ingraham community or any of our schools to experience this," Jones said at the meeting. "I saw the aftermath of this firsthand and I saw the yellow tape that should not be in our schools."

Before the meeting, Seattle School Board members embraced each other as they walked up to the dais, expressed their condolences and spoke about the shock, trauma, and hurt the death of a child has caused the community.

When she heard the news of the shooting, "my stomach just dropped," said Liza Rankin, the Seattle board member who represents the Ingraham High area.

Rankin said preventing gun violence has been a priority for her since she was elected to the board, and she has asked PTAs and others who work in schools to promote the King County Lock It Up program, which provides resources and support to store guns safely.

Community leaders mourned the victim, but quickly pivoted to calling for changes to prevent future attacks.

Seattle City Council President Debora Juarez, who represents the district that includes Ingraham, said she was "heartbroken" by the shooting.

"Sadly, gun violence is closer than we think in our communities, schools and public spaces. We must stand together as one city against the violence like we saw today," Juarez said in a written statement, recalling a 2018 gun violence protest held at the same school.

Harrell called for enhanced school safety and gun control in the city at a news conference on Tuesday. "Seattle Public Schools students can't learn or develop or grow to be the best versions of themselves when they have to fear for their lives," Harrell said.

"Our schools have to be the highest safe havens for our youths, for our teachers, for our families."

While an SPD spokesperson said the department does not track individual gun incidents at schools, the last two fatal shootings at or inside a Seattle public school happened 28 years ago, according to the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office. In 1994, [a student was killed outside of Ballard High School in a drive-by shooting](#), and that same year [a teacher was killed at Whitman Middle School by a former student he had abused](#).

At the mayor's news conference Tuesday, Seattle police Chief Adrian Diaz noted that there had been more than 600 shots fired in the city this year and over 1,000 firearms seized by the police.

On Wednesday, Harrell couldn't pinpoint a specific policy response to this incident, but suggested the state consider a number of approaches including training requirements, extended waiting periods and assault-rifle bans.

“It’s too early to know which exact gun safety measures might have prevented this tragedy. The simple fact is that there are too many guns in our communities and those guns are too easy to access,” Harrell said in a written statement, noting that “action will save lives, and inaction too often results in tragedy.”

“I’ll continue to push our state Legislature to adopt stronger gun laws, and lift restrictions that prevent local governments the freedom to enact their own gun safety policies — lives are on the line,” Harrell added.

Also on Tuesday, U.S. Rep. Pramila Jayapal — a Democrat who represents Washington’s 7th Congressional District, including most of Seattle — seconded Harrell’s calls for stricter gun control, calling on her colleagues to address the issue at the federal level.

“Even if cities take on the issue of guns, it is very difficult if somebody can bring guns in from somewhere else,” Jayapal said, noting that recent congressional gun control action “wasn’t sufficient.”

“You can’t solve this just as a city and so I recognize the work that we have to do at the federal level,” she added.

Jayapal said effective policy would have to be broader than just gun control, and would also have to address issues like mental health.

“And we will not rest until we can assure our families, our kids, our communities across the country that we are doing everything possible to address this crisis of gun violence, of mental health, of surviving, in a world that’s pretty darn tough,” she added.

In an interview after the board meeting, Jones talked about enacting measures outside of school to prevent gun violence, and “inside of school around social-emotional support and what are our community partners and resources we have that’s available to us to bring a whole comprehensive way to look at it.”

Brandon Hersey, Seattle Schools board president, said the board must start having conversations with other local elected leaders and community members, but also be “part of the healing process of folks most directly impacted. I think many things can be true at the same time.”

The shooting at Ingraham has had a ripple effect. Nathan Hale High School was ordered to shelter in place on Wednesday after threats of violence surfaced, district officials confirmed. Seattle student board member Luna Crone-Baron, who attends Nathan Hale, recalled teachers escorting students to the bathroom.

“What we need is to know that we are safe in our school buildings, and I can speak with confidence when I say we do not feel safe at school,” Crone-Baron said during the meeting. “And even as we look to how we create systemic solutions to make sure this doesn’t happen again, this kid, someone’s baby, is still dead.”

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HEADLINE	11/09 Snow, rain closes Highway 20 for season
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/transportation/snow-rain-in-cascades-closes-was-highway-20-for-the-season/
GIST	<p>With snow and rain in the Cascades, the Washington State Department of Transportation has closed Highway 20 for the season.</p> <p>The pass generally closes in November and will likely remain shut through April or May. Last year, the department shut the pass Nov. 15 and reopened it May 5. In 2020, the highway closed Nov. 16 and reopened May 12.</p> <p>Chinook and Cayuse passes closed for the season last month after a foot of early season snowfall.</p>

	<p>This year, “with about 30 inches of snowfall in the mountains and rain on the western slopes over the weekend, winter arrived with a wallop on the SR 20 North Cascades Highway,” WSDOT wrote in a Tuesday afternoon announcement.</p> <p>Temperatures dropped into the mid-20s to mid-30s for much of the region Wednesday morning, according to the National Weather Service for Seattle.</p> <p>“With weather deteriorating,” WSDOT temporarily closed parts of the pass earlier this month, from Thursday, Nov. 3, through the weekend. “A combination of heavy snow and rain through the weekend creates dangerous avalanche conditions,” it wrote at the time of that closure.</p> <p>Days later, on Tuesday, the department closed the highway for the season.</p> <p>The highway will remain closed between mileposts 134 — Ross Dam Trailhead — and 178 — Early Winters. The highway may reopen at milepost 171 — Silver Star gate — for snow-park access depending on resources and conditions, the department said.</p> <p>The pass is still open for recreational use. But, officials added, “be aware of potential avalanche hazards.”</p>
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HEADLINE	11/09 SWAT training near school after shooting
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/education/lab/spd-conducts-swat-exercise-near-a-school-one-day-after-ingraham-shooting/
GIST	<p>One day after a student was shot and killed inside Ingraham High School, students at a Seattle elementary school in Wallingford were subjected to armed police drills taking place at a house across the street from the playground.</p> <p>Sarah Jones, the principal of John Stanford International Elementary School, alerted families Wednesday through email and said the school wasn’t notified in advance by the Seattle Police Department, which was conducting training at the home near the school.</p> <p>But a Seattle Police spokesperson said the department’s SWAT commander notified the school 10 days before the training.</p> <p>“Students at recess saw the officers and saw some guns,” Jones’ email said. “I immediately informed the SPS Safety and Security department so that they could have a conversation with SPD. I am sorry for any increase in trauma or anxiety that this caused in your children.”</p> <p>Seattle Public Schools’ central office staff also said they were unaware training was taking place on Wednesday, district officials confirmed.</p> <p>It’s not the first time the police department’s SWAT team has done training across the street from John Stanford International. But in the past, Jones said, she was notified in advance of the exercise.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/09 WHO: 90% drop in Covid deaths since Feb.
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/who-reports-90-drop-in-world-covid-19-deaths-since-february/
GIST	<p>GENEVA (AP) — The World Health Organization chief on Wednesday said a nearly 90% drop in recent COVID-19 deaths globally compared to nine months ago provides “cause for optimism,” but still urged vigilance against the pandemic as variants continue to crop up.</p>

Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that last week just over 9,400 deaths linked to the coronavirus were reported to the WHO. In February of this year, he said, weekly deaths had topped 75,000 globally.

“We have come a long way, and this is definitely cause for optimism. But we continue to call on all governments, communities and individuals to remain vigilant,” he said at a virtual news conference from the WHO’s Geneva headquarters.

“Almost 10,000 deaths a week is 10,000 too many for a disease that can be prevented and treated.”

The WHO chief said testing and sequencing rates remain low globally, vaccination gaps between rich and poor countries are still wide, and new variants continue to proliferate.

The U.N. health agency said the tally of newly registered COVID-19 cases worldwide came in at over 2.1 million for the week ending Sunday, down 15% from the previous week. The number of weekly deaths fell 10% compared to a week earlier.

Overall, the WHO has reported 629 million cases and 6.5 million deaths linked to the pandemic.

Maria Van Kerkhove, the WHO’s technical lead on COVID-19, cited a “substantial underestimate” of the true circulation of the virus because surveillance and testing have declined along with a drop in case counts. She said the coronavirus outbreak is “still a pandemic, and it’s still circulating quite rampantly around the world” — and a key focus now was on hospitalizations and deaths.

The highest number of newly reported cases over the week came in Japan, with more than 401,000, an increase of 42% from the previous week. That was followed by Korea, the United States, Germany and China, which counted more than 219,000 new cases over the week — a drop of 15% from the previous week.

China still saw 539 deaths linked to COVID-19 during the week, an increase of 10% from the previous week.

While its numbers have remained relatively low, China has relentlessly pursued a strict “zero-COVID” policy of quarantines, lockdowns and daily or near-daily compulsory testing that has fanned protests and clashes between residents and authorities at times.

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HEADLINE	11/09 Record high: mentally-ill confined in jails
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/news/investigations/defendants-mental-illness-washington-jails-investigation/281-92db1269-038a-4b77-a234-d2a1dd64ff71
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash — Decades of research show that people with serious mental illness who are jailed, especially in solitary confinement, experience steep declines in their mental health. But in the state of Washington, the time spent behind bars for people who are mentally ill and waiting for court-ordered treatment is at an all-time high.</p> <p>“It pisses me off,” said 34-year-old Josh Stuller of Spokane, who spent more than a year in solitary confinement in the Chelan County Jail in Wenatchee in 2015 and 2016.</p> <p>“My message to (the state) is to get your act together and take it seriously because if you let people languish in the conditions of county jails for (long periods of time), I would consider that a crime against humanity,” said Stuller.</p> <p>Washington is experiencing the biggest backlog in state history of mentally ill defendants sitting in jails, waiting for required services to restore what’s called “competency.” That means giving defendants the help they need to understand the charges against them and to participate in their defense.</p>

In October 2021, approximately 350 defendants deemed incompetent to stand trial were waiting for a bed at [Western State Hospital](#) in Lakewood or [Eastern State Hospital](#) outside of Spokane. In October 2022, the number was about 850 people, a 142% increase in one year, state records show. The numbers include people waiting both in and out of county jails.

“(Jail) is the worst place to be for a person who has a serious mental illness,” said Lisa Dailey, executive director of the Washington DC-based [Treatment Advocacy Center](#). “It can really cause irreversible brain damage. And the longer that a person spends in untreated psychosis the harder it is for them to return to the same level of functioning once they’re receiving treatment again.”

The state agency charged with providing services to mentally ill defendants, the Department of Social and Health Services ([DSHS](#)) has been in [“contempt”](#) of a 2015 [federal court order](#) since July 2016. The order stems from a 2014 class action [lawsuit](#), known as [Trueblood](#). In the case, federal Judge Marsha Pechman ruled DSHS is violating the civil rights of defendants waiting in jail for services. She ordered that mentally ill defendants get a bed at a state psychiatric hospital within seven days. Currently some people are waiting seven months.

“We’re doing everything possible to get them out of that situation as quickly as possible,” said Dr. Thomas Kinlen, director of the DSHS [Office of Forensic Mental Health Services](#). “We don’t want them in jail. That’s not what we view as the treatment that they need.”

Researchers have long found the jail environment has [adverse impacts](#) on the mental health of people with serious mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

A 2013 United Nations [report](#) on the *Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners* concluded solitary confinement if used “for any reason based on discrimination,” amounts to “torture.” The expert panel also said solitary confinement should be “explicitly prohibited” for “persons with psychosocial disabilities.”

Advocates say the delays are unconstitutional because people with an illness have the right to medical care and shouldn’t be treated differently, such as being put in solitary confinement, because of a disability.

"For people who are mentally ill, the longer they're in isolation oftentimes the more entrenched their mental illness becomes. So people are decompensating. They end up in self-harming behaviors. Sometimes it can lead to death by suicide," said ACLU of Washington Legal Director La Rond Baker. "It's a very, very frightening situation."

Stuller, of Spokane, landed in jail after police found threatening writings and a list of names in his Wenatchee apartment in October 2015. Prosecutors charged him with attempted murder. Court records show he waited a month in solitary confinement for a mental health evaluation from DSHS. When an evaluator found him competent to stand trial he served another year in the concrete cell the size of a parking stall, 23 hours a day.

Stuller has a form of schizophrenia and said he didn’t understand the charges against him and didn’t remember writing the threats. Jail memos from a mental health counselor detailed his mental health decline.

“(Josh) hears negative hallucinations, a group of very mean people are always talking (to him). This is 24-7,” wrote Chelan County Regional Justice Center Mental Health Manager Leslie Carlson. “They tell him in a descriptive way that his parents are dead ... (and he sees) spiders and cockroaches (in his cell).”

“I was hearing voices saying ‘We’re going to kill you. This is the end of your life. We’ll let you know when and how we’re going to kill you,’” Stuller said. “If you’ve ever felt that level of human suffering that I’ve felt, I don’t believe that any human being deserves to feel that way.”

Stuller said he now has PTSD from the experience in the Chelan County jail, on top of his other diagnosis.

“It was a very steep decline,” Stuller said. “It added an additional diagnosis onto what I already had. And what I had is nothing I would wish on anybody. I’m still angry and I’m really trying to forgive but since I still continue to live with the after affects, I’m very bitter about it.”

Massive increase in demand

DSHS officials said the biggest challenge to moving people into Western and Eastern State hospitals is the dramatic increase in demand. The number of people in jail ordered to receive in-hospital services jumped from 996 people in 2015 to 2397 people in 2022. That’s an increase of 141%.

“We knew ahead of time that services would be increasing over time. We knew that. But can you predict? Can you look into a crystal ball and know exactly what’s going to happen? No,” said DSHS Chief Medical Officer Dr. Brian Waiblinger. “Ideally, they would be in the community. They would be with their family, their friends, they wouldn’t be involved in the criminal justice system. The ultimate goal is to prevent them from having that interaction, to begin with.”

DSHS has several construction projects underway to create more bed space and resources, including a 58-bed facility on the grounds of [Western State Hospital](#) scheduled to open within months. These beds are designated for people charged with a crime who need competency evaluations or restoration services.

“It’s a very difficult time right now,” Waiblinger said. “(But) I am very hopeful that we can turn this around. I think we need to do something about creating more community resources.”

Josh Stuller was found not guilty by reason of insanity in 2016. He was ordered to Eastern State Hospital for treatment. Within three months there receiving appropriate help, he said he was out of psychosis.

Today, Stuller is a new father and is engaged to be married. He’s also an advocate for stronger public policy surrounding the treatment and de-criminalization of people with mental illness.

“(Keeping people in jail), it’s barbaric. It’s 2022, not 1922,” Stuller said. “Quit making excuses. There are human lives at stake here.”

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HEADLINE	11/09 Railroad unions delay strike threat date
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/09/business/railroad-strike-threat-postponed/index.html
GIST	<p>New YorkCNN Business — The threat of a freight railroad strike has been pushed back to early December, as four major unions have agreed to coordinate the date on which they could potentially go on strike.</p> <p>The third-largest railroad union, the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employee Division, had been prepared to strike as soon as November 20, the Sunday before Thanksgiving. But the group announced Wednesday that it has agreed to extend negotiations with the railroads until at least December 4, the deadline set by another union, the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen. The rank and file members of both unions have rejected the tentative agreements reached with the railroads in September, mostly over the lack of sick pay in the contracts.</p> <p>A strike by any one rail union would lead to a shutdown of America’s major freight railroads, as all the other unions, even those that have ratified contracts, would honor the picket lines. That could cause severe economic problems, as 30% of America’s freight moves by rail, when measured by weight and distance traveled.</p> <p>The two largest rail unions, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and the Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation union, which represents conductors, are holding their own ratification votes,</p>

the results of which are due November 21. If one or both of those unions reject the deals, they would be prepared to strike December 9.

If one or both of those contracts are voted down, the BMWED said it is ready to further push its strike date back to December 9.

“If these unions do not ratify, then we will have the opportunity to bring all of rail labor together, under a single deadline, to finish national negotiations,” said the BMWED’s statement.

But reached Wednesday evening, Michael Baldwin, the president of the Signalmen’s union, said that he has not yet agreed to move his strike date back from the December 4 date.

The BMWED and Signalmen are engaged in negotiations with railroad management seeking deals that union leaders believe their members would ratify. The unions hope the extension will prevent Congress from imposing a contract or order them to keep working into the new year, when Republicans might be in control of one or both houses of Congress.

The unions want to maintain their ability to strike in order to increase their leverage with the railroads. Congress is due to return from recess next week.

Delaying the date of a threatened strike will “provide an opportunity to increasingly educate members of Congress — who have been out of session and consumed by the mid-term elections — about the railroad workers’ state of despair that management has created, and the railroad workers’ need for paid sick time off,” said the BMWED in a statement.

The unions are concerned that the November 20 strike threat would prompt the railroads to curtail services as soon as next week. The railroads [did just that](#) in the days before a marathon negotiating session [averted a scheduled September 16 strike](#). The unions were also concerned that cutting service could prompt Congress, under [pressure from freight rail customers](#), to rush through legislation to keep them on the job.

“With this extension, there is absolutely no reason for the railroads to discontinue services or threaten to discontinue their services,” the BMWED statement said. “There is now more than adequate time for the railroads to come to the bargaining table, engage in good-faith negotiations with us and reach a voluntary Agreement to provide all railroad workers with paid sick leave.”

But so far railroad management has rejected proposals by the rail unions for paid sick time out of hand. The National Carriers’ Conference Committee, which negotiates with the unions on behalf of the major freight railroads, said it will “remain engaged with BMWED throughout the extended cooling off period.”

But added that it will seek an agreement based on the framework of deals already ratified by the other unions.

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HEADLINE	11/09 British nurses to strike first time over pay
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/09/business/uk-nurses-strike/index.html
GIST	<p>Tens of thousands of British nurses will go on strike for the first time over demands for better pay, their trade union said on Wednesday, adding to pressure on Prime Minister Rishi Sunak during an economic crisis.</p> <p>Nurses at the majority of state-run National Health Service (NHS) employers across Britain have voted to strike, the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) said, in action that threatens major disruption to an already strained health system.</p> <p>The RCN, which has more than 300,000 members, said industrial action would begin before the end of the year following the first ever strike vote in its 106-year-old history.</p>

“Anger has become action — our members are saying enough is enough,” RCN General Secretary Pat Cullen said in a statement. “This action will be as much for patients as it is for nurses. Standards are falling too low.”

NHS nurses have seen their salaries cut by up to 20% in real terms over the last 10 years, the RCN has said. The union is asking for a pay hike of 5% above inflation.

Britain has seen a wave of industrial unrest this year across a range of professions as pay hikes fail to keep up with [inflation running at 10%](#).

Sunak’s spokesperson told reporters earlier on Wednesday the government wanted to strike a balance between the “crucial role” played by nurses and its fiscal challenges.

The RCN’s demands would amount to combined pay rises costing £9 billion (\$10.25 billion) which would be “simply not deliverable,” the spokesperson said, adding there were contingency plans in place for any “staff impact.”

The strike will come as the NHS faces its worst ever staffing crisis while it is still recovering from the hit to services during the Covid pandemic.

The much-cherished British institution, which has provided health care free at the point of use since 1948, is now dealing with a record 7 million patients on waiting lists for hospital treatment. Accident and emergency departments are also under strain.

“We are all hugely grateful for the hard work and dedication of NHS staff, including nurses, and deeply regret that some union members have voted for industrial action,” health minister Steve Barclay said.

“Our priority is keeping patients safe during any strikes. The NHS has tried and tested plans in place to minimize disruption and ensure emergency services continue to operate.”

Sunak has already faced pressure on the issue since [becoming prime minister](#) two weeks ago, when he was confronted by an elderly patient during a hospital visit who told him he needed to “try harder” on nurses pay.

Cullen called for “serious investment” from the government as it prepares to announce a budget next week aimed at repairing the nation’s public finances.

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HEADLINE	11/09 Ukraine, Russia winter stalemate?
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/ukraine-russia-war-winter-diplomacy-rcna56190
GIST	<p>Some U.S. and Western officials increasingly believe that neither side can achieve all of their goals in the Ukraine war and are eyeing the expected winter slowdown in fighting as an opportunity for diplomacy to begin between Russia and Ukraine, say officials familiar with the matter.</p> <p>Western defense officials question Ukraine’s ability to remove Russian troops completely from occupied areas, and if military operations on the ground stabilize over the winter that could underline that neither side is likely to achieve its goal of controlling the whole country, the officials said. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they are not authorized to speak publicly on matters of diplomacy.</p> <p>“In the winter everything slows down,” said a Western official with direct knowledge of military operations. “The potential for talks, we would like to see that happening.”</p> <p>The official pointed to a statement by Russia’s ambassador to the U.K. last week about the potential for negotiations as possible “messaging” toward a diplomatic path.</p>

U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan made a surprise visit last week to Kyiv, where he met with [President Volodymyr Zelenskyy](#) and top Ukrainian officials. The White House National Security Council said the meetings were to “underscore the United States’ [steadfast support to Ukraine](#) and its people.” But two people familiar with the meetings and a Ukrainian government official said Sullivan did broach the idea of how the conflict ends and whether it could include a diplomatic solution. “He was testing the waters a bit,” said a person familiar with the meetings.

The Ukrainian official said that during his meetings with Zelenskyy’s government, Sullivan raised the need for a diplomatic resolution to the war and made the point that Ukraine’s leverage would be strengthened — not weakened — if it expressed openness to ultimately negotiating with the Russians. The official said that Sullivan had not tried to pressure Ukraine to enter into negotiations immediately or to take any specific steps. Instead, the official said, Sullivan expressed the view that Ukraine would be able to maintain the support of Western allies better if it is perceived as being willing to reach an end to the conflict through diplomacy.

According to the Ukrainian official, Zelenskyy emphasized that Ukraine had pushed for diplomacy with Russia in the initial months of the war and only took talks with Putin off the table following documented atrocities and alleged war crimes that the official said had made talks with Moscow in the near term unpalatable to the Ukrainian public.

In a video tweeted Monday by an adviser to Ukraine’s Ministry of Internal Affairs, Zelenskyy listed conditions for negotiations that included restoration of territorial integrity, Russian payment of war damages and punishment for war criminals.

The U.S. and its allies do not want to be seen as pushing Ukraine into diplomacy, especially if that involves a formal arrangement that Russian-occupied areas in eastern Ukraine become Russian territory, U.S. and Ukrainian officials said. U.S. officials concede that bringing the two sides to the table will be challenging, and that both Russia and Ukraine are likely looking to the slower operational tempo this winter as a time to re-set and re-fit their forces to be ready for a spring offensive.

The U.S. and Western allies have discussed whether Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan could help mediate between the two sides, and Erdogan has already signaled a willingness to help broker a deal, according to a U.S. official, the Ukrainian government official and a former U.S. official familiar with the matter. Erdogan has been a constructive player in the conflict and one of the only world leaders still talking to both Ukraine and Russia, the Ukrainian government official said, adding that other countries, including Israel and the United Arab Emirates, have also floated the idea of mediating but that none of those offers seemed particularly viable.

A spokesperson for the NSC did not respond to a request for comment.

The U.S. ambassador to the U.N., Linda Thomas-Greenfield, told NBC News this week, “What we want to see for Ukraine is that they get justice, that they are in a position of strength when they go into any talks that they might have with the Russians.”

Battle lines

There are three main fronts in Ukraine: the battle around Kharkiv in the northeast, the massive Donetsk/Luhansk line along the central eastern border of the country, and [the fight for Kherson](#) in the south.

Kherson is the last major front line that could shift before winter, officials said, after which neither side is likely to make large advances. A defense official said there should be a clearer sense in the next two to three weeks of whether fighting will stabilize this winter as the battle around Kherson plays out.

Fighting is already slowing down and the Russians are preparing lines of defense in depth around Kherson, creating “the potential for this to be slower,” according to a Western official.

If Ukraine wins in Kherson it could put the Zelenskyy government in a better position to negotiate, U.S. and Western officials said. But, they added, it could also discourage Russia from coming to the table if President Vladimir Putin believes he's not negotiating from a position of strength.

Sullivan has opened a line of communication with his Russian counterpart, Russia Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev, including speaking with him about Russian allegations that Ukraine could be planning to use a dirty bomb inside Ukraine, according to two U.S. officials familiar with the calls. The call about the dirty bombs came as a number of other Biden administration officials, including Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and the Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, Gen. Mark Milley, also spoke with their counterparts about the allegations. Ukraine has denied the Russian claims and the U.S. has also rejected the Russian assertions.

Officials said concern about a false flag operation with a dirty bomb or even the use of a tactical nuclear weapon was extremely high for several days during the flurry of calls, but the communications between top U.S. officials and their Russian counterparts are believed to have helped bring down that tension, officials said. On the ongoing worry about Russia using a tactical nuclear weapon, one defense official said that the "concern has tamped down a bit."

Asked on Monday whether the Russian government is ready for talks with Ukraine, press secretary Dmitry Peskov told reporters, "We have repeatedly said that the Russian side remains open to achieving its goals through the negotiations. But we have also repeatedly drawn everyone's attention to the fact that at the moment we do not see any opportunity for that since it is codified in Kyiv, that is, written in the law, that they cannot continue any negotiations with the Russian side."

The growing belief that there's no military resolution to the war and the rising hope that Ukraine and Russia move toward starting diplomatic talks comes as Ukraine needs additional military aid. The White House and Congress are expected to consider additional funds for assistance for Ukraine, potentially \$40 billion to \$60 billion, NBC News has reported. Some Republicans and Democrats have begun to question whether the U.S. should send additional tens of billions of dollars to Ukraine.

The Western official said, "It's increasingly apparent that Russia has now moved to a more definitively defensive position along most of the front lines, and we're seeing a force gradually growing with the arrival of mobilized reservists. But a pretty low-quality force, likely little suited to complex offensive operations, and also short of munitions. We believe that the Russians are still planning for military withdrawal from their bridgehead on the west side of the Dnieper River, just by Kherson. And we think that planning is almost certainly well advanced."

"It's likely that most echelons of command have withdrawn now across the river to the east, leaving pretty demoralized, and often, in some cases leaderless troops to face Ukrainians on the other side. A substantial number of forces across the river in Kherson are recently mobilized reservists. And it's apparent to this lot also from the video circulating that a lot of these folks are woefully equipped and prepared."

U.S. officials believe the Russian withdrawal will be contested and could be slower, as Ukrainian forces are likely to keep fighting the Russians as they withdraw toward Crimea and elsewhere.

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HEADLINE	11/09 China manufacturing hub virus lockdown
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/virus-lockdowns-hit-china-economic-powerhouse-guangzhou-92980519
GIST	BEIJING -- A surge in COVID-19 cases has spurred lockdowns in the southern Chinese manufacturing hub of Guangzhou, adding to financial pressure that has disrupted global supply chains and sharply slowed growth in the world's second-largest economy.

	<p>Residents in districts encompassing almost 5 million people have been ordered to stay home at least through Sunday, with one member of each family allowed out once per day to purchase necessities, local authorities said Wednesday.</p> <p>The order came after the densely populated city of 13 million reported more than 2,500 new cases over the previous 24 hours. Public transport has been suspended and classes halted across much of Guangzhou, while flights to Beijing and other major cities have been canceled, according to state media.</p> <p>China has retained its strict “zero-COVID” policy despite relatively low case numbers and no new deaths.</p> <p>The country’s borders remain largely closed and internal travel and trade is fraught with ever-changing quarantine regulations.</p> <p>The tight restrictions have sparked occasional clashes between residents and local Communist Party officials, who are threatened with punishment if reported cases in their areas of jurisdiction climb above levels deemed acceptable.</p> <p>The party under the leadership of President Xi Jinping has dismissed calls from the United Nations' World Health Organization to ease regulations, refused to import foreign vaccines and defied requests to release more information about the source of the virus, which was first detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/09 Brazil armed forces find no election fraud
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/brazil-armed-forces-report-election-finds-fraud-93024939
GIST	<p>RIO DE JANEIRO -- The defense ministry released a report Wednesday highlighting flaws in Brazil's electoral systems and proposing improvements, but there was nothing to substantiate claims of fraud from some of President Jair Bolsonaro’s supporters protesting his Oct. 30 defeat.</p> <p>It was the first comment by the military on the runoff election, which has drawn protests nationwide even as the transition has begun for President-elect Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's inauguration Jan. 1. Thousands have been gathering outside military installations in Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Brasilia and other cities calling for intervention by the armed forces to keep Bolsonaro in office.</p> <p>When the defense ministry announced this week that it would present its report on the election, some Bolsonaro supporters rejoiced, anticipating the imminent revelation of a smoking gun. That didn't happen.</p> <p>“There is nothing astonishing in the document,” Diego Aranha, an associate professor of systems security at Aarhus University in Denmark, who has been a member of the Brazilian electoral authority’s public security tests, told The Associated Press. “The limitations found are the same ones analysts have been complaining about for decades ... but that doesn't point to evidence of irregularity.”</p> <p>Defense Minister Paulo Nogueira wrote that “it is not possible to say” with certainty the computerized vote tabulation system hasn't been infiltrated by malicious code, but the 65-page report does not cite any abnormalities in the vote count. Based on the possible risk, however, the report suggests creating a commission comprised of members of civil society and auditing entities to further investigate the functioning of the electronic voting machines.</p> <p>Bolsonaro, whose less than two-point loss was the narrowest margin since Brazil’s 1985 return to democracy, hasn't specifically cried foul since the election.</p> <p>Still, his continued refusal to concede defeat or congratulate his opponent left ample room for supporters to draw their own conclusions. And that followed more than a year of Bolsonaro repeatedly claiming Brazil's electronic voting system is prone to fraud, without ever presenting any evidence — even when ordered to do so by the electoral authority.</p>

In the months leading up to the vote, as polls showed him trailing da Silva, Bolsonaro pushed for the military to take on an expanded role in the electoral process. The election authority, in a gesture apparently aimed at placating the president, allowed for armed forces' unprecedented participation. The report presented Wednesday was signed by the defense minister and representatives from the army, navy and air force.

The electoral authority said in a statement it "received with satisfaction the defense ministry's final report that, like all other oversight bodies, did not point to the existence of any fraud or inconsistency in the electronic voting machines and 2022 electoral process."

Bolsonaro didn't immediately comment on the report, nor did the presidential palace respond to an AP email. His party's leader said Tuesday the president would question election results only if the report provided "real" evidence.

Da Silva, speaking Wednesday in the capital, Brasilia, on his first visit since the election, told reporters that the vote was clean and Brazil's electronic voting machine system is an achievement.

"No one will believe coup-mongering discourse from someone who lost the elections," da Silva said. "We know that the institutions were attacked by some government authorities."

Brazil began using an electronic voting system in 1996. Election security experts consider such systems less secure than hand-marked paper ballots, because they leave no auditable paper trail. Brazil's system is, however, closely scrutinized and domestic authorities and international observers have never found evidence of it being exploited to commit fraud. Outside security audits have been done to prevent the system's software from being surreptitiously altered. In addition, prior to election day, tests are conducted to assure no tampering has occurred.

The electoral authority said in its statement Wednesday that it would analyze the defense ministry's suggestions. Aranha, the system security professor, said the military's suggestions to address flaws aren't specific and would actually make an audit even more difficult.

This year, the armed forces also conducted a partial audit, comparing hundreds of voting stations' results to the official tally. The idea was first floated by Bolsonaro, who in May said they "will not perform the role of just rubber stamping the electoral process, or taking part as spectators."

The federal government's accounts watchdog carried out a partial audit similar to that of the military, tallying votes in 604 voting machines across Brazil. It found no discrepancies. Likewise, Brazil's Bar Association said in a report Tuesday that it had found nothing that pointed to suspicion of irregularities.

"There are important lessons from all this," said Paulo Calmon, a political science professor at the University of Brasilia, who continued: "primarily, the idea to formally involve the armed forces in electoral processes is an error that should never be repeated."

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HEADLINE	11/09 Ethiopia peace talks extended
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/ethiopia-peace-talks-extended-disarmament-aid-discussed-93038774
GIST	<p>NAIROBI, Kenya -- The latest round of peace talks between Ethiopia's government and representatives of the country's Tigray region has been extended as military commanders work out details on disarmament of Tigray forces after two years of conflict.</p> <p>An official familiar with the talks confirmed the extension into Thursday, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly. The talks that began Monday in Kenya had been set to end Wednesday.</p>

	<p>The African Union-led talks follow last week's signing of a "permanent cessation of hostilities" in the conflict that is estimated to have killed hundreds of thousands of people.</p> <p>The agreement calls for the disarmament of Tigray forces within weeks, but there is concern about when other combatants who aren't part of the deal will withdraw from Tigray. They include forces from Eritrea, which neighbors the region, and Ethiopia's Amhara region.</p> <p>Other issues discussed at this round of talks include the restoration of basic services like internet, telecommunications and banking to the region of more than 5 million people, as well as the resumption of deliveries of humanitarian aid.</p> <p>The United Nations on Wednesday said they and partners were still waiting on access to a region where even some basic medical supplies have run out. World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who is from Ethiopia, told reporters he had expected aid to resume "immediately" after the peace deal's signing.</p> <p>The lead negotiator for Ethiopia's government, Redwan Hussein, has said that "maybe by the end of this week or the middle of next week" humanitarian aid will be allowed to go in.</p> <p>United Nations-backed investigators have said Ethiopian forces resorted to "starvation of civilians" as a weapon in the conflict marked by abuses on all sides.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/10 Kenya's new regional force to Congo
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/kenya-spend-37-million-sending-forces-congo-93038835
GIST	<p>NAIROBI, Kenya -- Kenya's parliament has approved the deployment of nearly 1,000 troops for a new regional force in eastern Congo amid questions about the \$37 million cost for the first six months of the mission.</p> <p>A parliament committee report says the money will be spent on equipment, allowances and operations for the more than 900 troops joining the East African Community Regional Force that will support Congolese forces against armed groups.</p> <p>Opposition lawmakers questioned why Kenya is spending so much money on the regional mission while the country faces its own security issues. Kenya also faces rising inflation and a high public debt.</p> <p>Kenyan President William Ruto last week called the mission "necessary and urgent" for regional security. Violence by armed groups in eastern Congo has led to a diplomatic crisis between Congo and neighboring Rwanda, which accuse each other of backing certain groups.</p> <p>The Kenyan forces will be based in Goma, eastern Congo's largest city. The regional force, agreed upon by heads of state in June and led by a Kenyan commander, also has two battalions from Uganda, two from Burundi and one from South Sudan.</p> <p>There is a possibility that international financing may be secured for the mission, the committee report said.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/10 Ukraine signs Southeast Asia peace accord
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/ukraine-boosts-southeast-asia-ties-peace-accord-93036819
GIST	<p>PHNOM PENH, Cambodia -- Ukraine signed a peace accord Thursday with Southeast Asian nations, a largely symbolic act that comes as Kyiv seeks to shore up international support in isolating Russia.</p>

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba signed the “Treaty on Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia” as the annual summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations got underway in Phnom Penh.

The ASEAN summit kicks off a series of three top-level meetings in Asia, with the Group of 20 summit in Bali to follow and then the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Bangkok. They come as Russia seeks new markets for its energy products to avoid Western sanctions following its invasion of Ukraine.

As a group, the ASEAN nations, with a combined population of nearly 700 million, have been reserved in their stance toward the invasion, condemning the war but generally trying to avoid assigning blame. Eight of 10 ASEAN countries did vote in favor of the U.N. General Assembly resolution condemning Russian aggression, with Vietnam and Laos abstaining.

Member state Singapore has taken the strongest stance, imposing unilateral sanctions on Russia, while Cambodia has been increasingly supportive of Ukraine in its ASEAN chairmanship.

In an early November call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Cambodian President Hun Sen stressed the need for an end to the war “so that Ukraine can regain peace, stability, territorial integrity and development,” according to Hun Sen's office.

“Cambodia is against the aggression, the threat of or use of force over sovereignty and the territorial integrity of an independent state, and does not support the secession or the annexation of territory by other countries,” Hun Sen said on the call.

The Cambodian leader also pledged to support Ukraine's aspirations to become a “Sectoral Dialogue Partner” with ASEAN, a step toward the full “Dialogue Partnership” the group has with Russia, China, the United States and others.

The “TAC” peace treaty established in 1976 commits parties to “mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national identity of all nations,” among other things.

Ahead of the summit, Daniel Kritenbrink, U.S. assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, said the inclusion of Ukraine was important, especially since Russia's invasion “has sent shockwaves throughout the Indo-Pacific, including Indo-Pacific economies, as we've seen through rising energy and food prices.”

He told a panel hosted by Washington’s Center for Strategic and International Studies in late October that the U.S. would work with ASEAN to “ensure that Ukraine meaningfully participates and that the partners send a strong message that big countries cannot simply take what they want from smaller neighbors.”

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova dismissed questions about the significance of Ukraine's presence at the meetings.

“This theme in general has nothing to do with us,” she told reporters on Wednesday.

U.S. President Joe Biden is attending the ASEAN and parallel East Asia Summit talks in person, while Russian President Vladimir Putin is not — with Moscow instead sending Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Indonesia confirmed Thursday that Putin will also not attend the G-20 summit in Bali next week, and it seems unlikely he will attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Bangkok that follows.

Putin's absence should leave the door open for Ukraine to try and win more support, wrote Susannah Patton, the director of the Southeast Asia Program at the Lowy Institute, in an analysis published Thursday.

“While opinion in Asia about Russia's invasion of Ukraine remains mixed, the summits look likely to be better for Ukraine than Russia, and Putin's absence will undercut talk of a Russian pivot to Asia,” Patton said.

ASEAN is made up of Cambodia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Laos, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Brunei and Myanmar. Myanmar’s leaders are not being allowed to participate in the current meetings due to ongoing violence in the country and its lack of effort in implementing the group's peace plan, and they rejected a proposal to send non-political representatives.

Ahead of Friday's opening ceremonies for the ASEAN summit, diplomats were already working on the issue of Myanmar and how to increase pressure on it to follow the five-point peace plan.

The plan calls for the immediate cessation of violence, a dialogue among all parties, mediation by an ASEAN special envoy, provision of humanitarian aid and a visit to Myanmar by the special envoy to meet all sides.

Senior ASEAN diplomats met Wednesday in Phnom Penh to try to finalize a set of recommendations to their heads of state aimed at resolving the Myanmar crisis but failed to reach consensus, two Southeast Asian diplomats told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the private talks.

The dilemma involved resolving how to increase pressure on Myanmar’s military leadership to comply with the peace plan without resorting to suspending it from ASEAN, the diplomats said.

One of the two said there was a proposal to further downgrade Myanmar’s status in other aspects of ASEAN activities beyond just banning its military leaders and their political representatives from attending annual summits and key meetings.

ASEAN foreign ministers were expected to continue the discussions during a scheduled meeting on Thursday.

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HEADLINE	11/09 Philippine troops clash w/Muslim rebels
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/killed-philippine-troops-clash-muslim-rebels-93030414
GIST	<p>MANILA, Philippines -- Philippine troops have clashed with Muslim guerrillas in a southern village, leaving at least three soldiers and four rebels dead and sparking fears that an escalation could threaten a 2014 peace pact that has considerably eased years of heavy fighting.</p> <p>The sporadic clashes erupted Tuesday and Wednesday in a village in Ungkaya Pukan town on the island province of Basilan, where leaders of the military and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front separately ordered their forces to halt the fighting and allow de-escalation talks on Thursday.</p> <p>Military and rebel commanders at the scene of the fighting accused each other of violating the 2014 peace accord, which eased years of bloody and extensive fighting between government forces and the Muslim rebel front, the largest separatist insurgent group in the south of the largely Roman Catholic nation.</p> <p>The clashes left three soldiers dead and seven others wounded, the military said, while the rebels reported at least four dead and several others wounded. The conflict underscored the fragility of law and order in a southern region faced with a surfeit of loose firearms, private armies, crushing poverty and a long history of violence.</p> <p>Under the 2014 peace pact, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front dropped its secessionist demand in exchange for a more powerful and better-funded Muslim autonomous region called Bangsamoro.</p>

The five-province Muslim region is now led by former guerrilla leaders under a transition period ending in 2025.

Nearly half of about 40,000 guerrillas have agreed to lay down their firearms and return to normal life in exchange for livelihood packages under the peace pact. Thousands of other rebels have kept their firearms while waiting to be subjected to a years-long “decommissioning process,” a subtle term for surrendering their weapons. The process has been delayed amid complaints that former rebels have failed to receive promised cash and other incentives from the government.

“This is very alarming because the implications are worrisome to us,” Naguib Sinarimbo, the interior minister of the Bangsamoro autonomous region, told The Associated Press. “Our worry is if there are sparks like this, concerns may arise whether the decommissioning process would continue.”

Brig. Gen. Domingo Gobway, an army brigade commander in Basilan, said his forces were cracking down on armed men involved in extortion and intimidation using homemade bombs. Amid the military campaign, the gunmen fled to a Basilan village called Ulitán, where they were protected by Moro Islamic Liberation Front guerrillas, he said.

The rebels and the extortion gang were forced to leave Ulitán village in September amid the military crackdown, but Moro Islamic Liberation Front guerrillas returned on Monday with their firearms in violation of an agreement that rebel firearms and other weapons should be restricted in mutually identified Moro Islamic Liberation Front encampments, Gobway said.

Troops came under fire in Ulitán on Tuesday and Wednesday, prompting them to return fire and take action to bring the situation under control, military officials said.

Mohagher Iqbal, who led the Muslim guerrillas in years of peace talks with the government, said the violence “was an unfortunate incident that no one desired to happen ... while the peace process’ dividends have started to be felt by the people.”

Iqbal called for the combatants’ “immediate disengagement to prevent the situation from escalating” and urged government and rebel ceasefire representatives to carry out an investigation to prevent a repeat of such deadly clashes.

Western governments have welcomed progress in years of peace talks between Manila and Muslim rebels that have turned major battlefields into potential growth centers in the south in recent years, in the homeland for minority Muslims who live in some of the poorest and least-developed provinces in the country.

Had the decades-old Muslim insurgency continued to flare in the southern Philippines, there were worries that large numbers of Muslim insurgents could forge an alliance with outside militant forces and turn the south into a breeding ground for extremists.

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HEADLINE	11/10 Protests in Iran rage on streets
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/iran-protests-rage-streets-officials-renew-threats-93030241
GIST	<p>DUBAI, United Arab Emirates -- Protests in Iran raged on streets into Thursday with demonstrators remembering a bloody crackdown in the country's southeast, even as the nation's intelligence minister and army chief renewed threats against local dissent and the broader world.</p> <p>Meanwhile, a top official in Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard claimed it had “achieved” having so-called hypersonic missiles, without providing any evidence.</p>

The protests in Iran, sparked by the Sept. 16 death of a 22-year-old woman after her detention by the country's morality police, have grown into one of the largest sustained challenges to the nation's theocracy since the chaotic months after its 1979 Islamic Revolution.

At least 328 people have been killed and 14,825 others arrested in the unrest, according to Human Rights Activists in Iran, a group that's been monitoring the protests over their 54 days. Iran's government for weeks has remained silent on casualty figures while state media counterfactually claims security forces have killed no one.

As demonstrators now return to the streets to mark 40th-day remembrances for those slain earlier — commemorations common in Iran and the wider Middle East — the protests may turn into cyclical confrontations between an increasingly disillusioned public and security forces that turn to greater violence to suppress them.

Online videos emerging from Iran, despite government efforts to suppress the internet, appeared to show demonstrations in Tehran, the capital, as well as cities elsewhere in the country. Near Isfahan, video showed clouds of tear gas. Shouts of “Death to the Dictator” could be heard — a common chant in the protests targeting Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

It wasn't immediately clear if there were injuries or arrests in this round of protests, though Iran's state-run IRNA news agency acknowledged the demonstrations near Isfahan. They commemorated the Sept. 30 crackdown in Zahedan, a city in Iran's restive Sistan and Baluchestan province, in which activists say security forces killed nearly 100 people in the deadliest violence to strike amid the demonstrations.

Meanwhile Thursday, Guard Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh said in a speech that his forces “achieved” acquiring hypersonic missiles. However, he offered no photograph, video or other evidence to support the claim and the Guard's vast ballistic missile program is not known to have any of the weapons in its arsenal.

Hypersonic weapons, which fly at speeds in excess of Mach 5, or five times the speed of sound, could pose crucial challenges to missile defense systems because of their speed and maneuverability.

China is believed to be pursuing the weapons, as is America. Russia claims to already be fielding the weapons and have said it used them on the battlefield in Ukraine.

Iranian officials have kept up their threats against the demonstrators and the wider world. In an interview with Khamenei's personal website, Iranian Intelligence Minister Esmail Khatib renewed threats against Saudi Arabia, a nation along with Britain, Israel and the U.S. that officials have blamed for fomenting unrest that appears focused on local grievances.

Khatib warned that Iran's “strategic patience” could run out.

“Throwing stones at powerful Iran by countries sitting in glass houses has no meaning other than crossing the borders of rationality into the darkness of stupidity,” Khatib said. “Undoubtedly, if the will of the Islamic Republic of Iran is given to reciprocate and punish these countries, the glass palaces will collapse and these countries will not see stability.”

Iran blames Iran International, a London-based, Farsi-language satellite news channel once majority-owned by a Saudi national, for stirring up protesters. The broadcaster in recent days said the Metropolitan Police warned that two of its British-Iranian journalists faced threats from Iran that “represent an imminent, credible and significant risk to their lives and those of their families.”

Last week, U.S. officials said Saudi Arabia shared intelligence with America that suggests Iran could be preparing for an imminent attack on the kingdom. Iran later called the claim “baseless,” though the threats from Tehran continue.

	<p>The commander of the ground forces of Iran's regular army, Brig. Gen. Kiumars Heydari, separately issued his own threat against the protesters, whom he called “flies.”</p> <p>“If these flies are not dealt with today as the revolutionary society expects, it is the will of the supreme leader of the revolution,” he reportedly said. “But the day he issues an order to deal with them, they will definitely have no place in the country.”</p>
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HEADLINE	11/09 US: 100,000 Russia troops killed, wounded
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory/100000-russian-troops-killed-injured-ukraine-us-93027528
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON -- Russia's announced retreat from Kherson, a regional capital in southern Ukraine that it seized early in the war, and a potential stalemate in fighting over the winter could provide both countries an opportunity to negotiate peace, Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Wednesday.</p> <p>He said as many as 40,000 Ukrainian civilians and “well over” 100,000 Russian soldiers have been killed or wounded in the war, now in its ninth month. “Same thing probably on the Ukrainian side,” Milley added.</p> <p>“There has been a tremendous amount of suffering, human suffering,” he said at The Economic Club of New York.</p> <p>Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Tuesday he was open to peace talks with Russia to end the war but only on the condition that Russia return all of Ukraine’s occupied lands, provide compensation for war damage and face prosecution for war crimes.</p> <p>Russia has said it is open to talks, and this week announced it had begun a retreat from Kherson.</p> <p>Zelenskyy has warned that the Russians are feigning a pullout from Kherson to lure the Ukrainian army into an entrenched battle in the strategic industrial port city, a gateway to the Russian-occupied Crimean Peninsula.</p> <p>Milley, the highest-ranking U.S. military officer, said Russia had amassed 20,000 to 30,000 troops in Kherson and a full retreat could take several weeks.</p> <p>“The initial indicators are they are in fact doing it. They made the public announcement they’re doing it. I believe they’re doing it in order to preserve their force to reestablish defensive lines south of the (Dnieper) river, but that remains to be seen” he said.</p> <p>Milley said it’s possible the Russians will use the retreat to reset their troops for a spring offensive, but “there’s also an opportunity here, a window of opportunity for negotiation.”</p> <p>But for negotiations to have a chance, both Russia and Ukraine would have to reach a “mutual recognition” that a military victory “is maybe not achievable through military means, and therefore you need to turn to other means,” Milley said, citing the end of World War I as an example.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/09 Russia warns of ‘radiation disaster’
SOURCE	https://www.newsweek.com/russia-radiation-disaster-anatoly-antonov-dirty-bomb-nuclear-ukraine-1758214
GIST	<p>Anatoly Antonov, Russia's ambassador to the United States, warned of a "radiation disaster" on Wednesday as the Kremlin continues to ramp up nuclear war talk.</p> <p>"Today we face the threat of a radiation disaster," Antonov said in an article posted by the Russian embassy on the Telegram messaging app.</p>

He doubled down on Russia's claims that Ukraine intends to use a "dirty bomb," although both Ukrainian and U.S. officials have rejected claims Kyiv was plotting to explode such a device.

"Detonation of such radiological explosive device will have the magnitude comparable to an explosion of a low-yield nuclear weapon," Antonov said.

"The blast wave will disperse radioactive substances over the area of up to several thousand square meters. Contaminated territories will turn into an exclusion zone for 30-50 years."

His latest remarks come as the West has repeatedly rejected Russia's "[dirty bomb](#)" claims as false.

The [United Nations](#) watchdog confirmed last week that found no sign of "undeclared nuclear activities" at three sites it inspected in Ukraine in response to the allegations from Russia.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) issued a statement on Thursday saying that it had been granted "unfettered access" to the Institute for Nuclear Research in Kyiv, Eastern Mining and Processing Plant in Zhovti Kody, and Production Association Pivdennyi Machine-Building Plant in Dnipro.

"Based on the evaluation of the results available to date and the information provided by Ukraine, the agency did not find any indications of undeclared nuclear activities and materials at the locations," the IAEA said.

Antonov, however, accused Kyiv on Wednesday as working on creating a "dirty bomb."

A [dirty bomb](#) is defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)) as a mix of explosives and radioactive material such as powder or pellets.

"When the dynamite or other explosives are set off, the blast carries radioactive material into the surrounding area," the CDC states on its website.

Antonov claimed that an "even more dangerous scenario" Kyiv is considering "is a provocation at nuclear power plants located in the territory controlled by Ukraine."

"This could lead to an accident comparable to the Chernobyl and Fukushima disasters which the world has not yet recovered from," Antonov added.

Some Ukrainian and western officials have accused Russia of pushing the claims to cover up provocations it planned to stage itself.

The ambassador's claims come as fears about the use of atomic weapons by Russian President [Vladimir Putin](#) continue to grow, and as talks of the use of nuclear weapons continue to make headlines.

The Russian leader has warned about his readiness to use "all means available" to fend off attacks on Russia's territory.

The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement on November 2 that Russia "is strictly and consistently guided by the postulate of the inadmissibility of a nuclear war in which there can be no winners and which must never be unleashed."

White House national security advisor [Jake Sullivan](#) said that Washington and Moscow have held talks aimed at lowering the rhetoric around Russia's potential use of nuclear weapons.

On Tuesday, Ukraine [held exercises](#) to prepare for a nuclear strike. Ruslan Zaporaniuk, head of the military administration in Ukraine's western Chernivtsi region, announced on his Telegram channel that drills were held "to eliminate the consequences of a [nuclear](#) strike."

	<i>Newsweek</i> has contacted Ukraine's foreign ministry for comment.
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Cyber, Tech Awareness

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HEADLINE	11/09 Egypt COP27 app as a cyber weapon?
SOURCE	https://www.politico.eu/article/cop-27-climate-change-app-cybersecurity-weapon-risks/
GIST	<p>Western security advisers are warning delegates at the COP27 climate summit not to download the host Egyptian government's official smartphone app, amid fears it could be used to hack their private emails, texts and even voice conversations.</p> <p>Policymakers from Germany, France and Canada were among those who had downloaded the app by November 8, according to two separate Western security officials briefed on discussions within these delegations at the U.N. climate summit.</p> <p>Other Western governments have advised officials not to download the app, said another official from a European government. All of the officials spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss international government deliberations.</p> <p>The potential vulnerability from the Android app, which has been downloaded thousands of times and provides a gateway for participants at COP27, was confirmed separately by four cybersecurity experts who reviewed the digital application for POLITICO.</p> <p>The app is being promoted as a tool to help attendees navigate the event. But it risks giving the Egyptian government permission to read users' emails and messages. Even messages shared via encrypted services like WhatsApp are vulnerable, according to POLITICO's technical review of the application, and two of the outside experts.</p> <p>The app also provides Egypt's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, which created it, with other so-called backdoor privileges, or the ability to scan people's devices.</p> <p>On smartphones running Google's Android software, it has permission to potentially listen into users' conversations via the app, even when the device is in sleep mode, according to the three experts and POLITICO's separate analysis. It can also track people's locations via smartphone's built-in GPS and Wi-Fi technologies, according to two of the analysts.</p> <p>The app is nothing short of "a surveillance tool that could be weaponized by the Egyptian authorities to track activists, government delegates and anyone attending COP27," said Marwa Fatafta, digital rights lead for the Middle East and North Africa for Access Now, a nonprofit digital rights organization.</p> <p>"The application is a cyber weapon," said one security expert after reviewing it, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to protect colleagues attending COP.</p> <p>The Egyptian government did not respond to requests for comment. Google said it had reviewed the app and had not found any violations to its app policies.</p> <p>The potential security risk comes as thousands of high-profile officials descend on Sharm El-Sheikh, the Egyptian resort town, where so-called QR codes, or quasi-bar codes that direct people to download the smartphone application, are dotted around the city.</p> <p>Participants at COP27 include global leaders like French President Emmanuel Macron, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, though such high profile politicians are unlikely to download another government's app.</p>

The experts who spoke to POLITICO said that much of the data and access that the COP27 app gets is fairly standard. But, according to three of these specialists, the combination of the Egyptian government's track record on human rights and the types of people who would download the app represent a cause for concern.

Strange and extensive access

Three of the researchers said the app posed surveillance risks to those who download it due to its widespread permissions to review people's devices, though the extent of the risk remains unclear.

Elias Koivula, a researcher at WithSecure, a cybersecurity firm, reviewed the Android app for POLITICO and said he had found no evidence people's emails had been read. Many of the permissions granted to the climate change conference app also have benign purposes like keeping people up-to-date with the latest travel information around the summit, he added.

But Koivula said other permissions granted to the app appeared "strange" and could potentially be used to track people's movements and communications. So far, he said he had no evidence that such activity had taken place.

Not all the experts agreed on the risks.

Paul Shunk, a security intelligence engineer at cybersecurity firm Lookout, said he had found no evidence the app had access to emails, describing the idea that it posed a surveillance risk as "strange." He was confident the app was not built as typical spyware, pouring cold water on claims the app functioned as a listening device. Shunk said it could not record audio if it was running in the background, which makes it "almost completely unsuitable for spying on users."

The COP27 app uses location tracking "extensively," Shunk said, but seemingly for legitimate purposes like route planning for summit attendees. It lacked the ability to access location in the background, based on Android permissions, which would be what the app would need for continuous location tracking, he added.

The other two cybersecurity analysts who reviewed the app spoke on the condition of anonymity to safeguard their ongoing security work and to protect colleagues attending the climate change conference.

"Let me put it this way: I wouldn't download this app onto my phone," said one of those experts. Those two the researchers also warned that once the application had been downloaded onto a device, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to remove its ability to access people's sensitive data — even after it had been deleted.

POLITICO checked the app's potential security risks via two open cybersecurity tools, and both raised concerns about its ability to listen to people's conversations, track their locations and alter how the app operates without asking for permission.

Both Google and Apple approved the app to appear in their separate app stores. All of the analysts only reviewed the Android version of the app, and not the separate app created for Apple's devices. Apple declined to comment on the separate app created for its App Store.

Egypt's track(ing) record

Adding to rights groups' concerns is the track record of the Egyptian government to monitor its people. In the wake of the so-called Arab Spring, Cairo has clamped down on dissidents and used local emergency rules to track its citizens online and offline activity, according to a [report](#) by Privacy International, a nonprofit organization.

As part of the smartphone app's privacy notice, the Egyptian government says it has the right to use information provided by those who have downloaded the app, including GPS locations, camera access, photos and Wi-Fi details.

"Our application reserves the right to access customer accounts for technical and administrative purposes and for security reasons," the privacy statement said.

Yet the technical review, both by POLITICO and the outside experts of the COP27 smartphone application discovered further permissions that people had granted, unwittingly, to the Egyptian government that were not made public via its public statements.

These included the application having the right to track what attendees did on other apps on their phone; connecting users' smartphones via Bluetooth to other hardware in ways that could lead to data being offloaded onto government-owned devices; and independently linking individuals' phones to Wi-Fi networks, or making calls on their behalf without them knowing.

"The Egyptian government cannot be entrusted with managing people's personal data given its dismal human rights record and blatant disregard for privacy," said Fatafta, the digital rights campaigner.

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HEADLINE	11/09 Malicious 'Cloud9' Chrome extension RAT
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazine.com/news/malware/malicious-cloud9-chrome-extension-operates-like-a-remote-access-trojan
GIST	<p>Researchers reported discovering a malicious Chrome browser extension — dubbed "Cloud9" by the author — that steals the information available during a browser session and then installs malware to assume control of the entire device.</p> <p>In a Tuesday blog post, the Zimperium zLabs team explained that Cloud9 behaves like a remote access trojan (RAT) and performs at least 10 different types of malicious activities, including cookie stealing, keylogging, Layer 4/Layer 7 hybrid attacks, and OS and browser detection for next stage payloads.</p> <p>The researchers also said the malware originated from the Keksec malware group, which was originally formed in 2016 by botnet actors. This group has been best known for its DDoS, mining-based malware and botnets.</p> <p>What's most troubling about this malware is its ability to avoid existing endpoint detection systems, said Bud Broomhead, chief executive officer at Viakoo. Broomhead said this reinforces that threat actors are aiming to avoid traditional security solutions, in this case existing endpoint malware detection systems.</p> <p>"It's similar to how threat actors have been targeting IoT/OT systems, which are not supported by traditional IT security solutions," said Broomhead. "Many browsers are used as interfaces to OT equipment, specifically to access consoles that manage and control these systems. This could be a path for IoT/OT devices being exploited."</p> <p>John Bambenek, principal threat hunter at Netenrich, added that this malware primarily uses older browser vulnerabilities, so security teams should keep browsers patched and updated.</p> <p>"That being said, any functionality or extension added into the browser or config changes can have profound security implications," Bambenek said. "The browser config should be tightly controlled and only allow specific browser extensions to be installed."</p> <p>Matthew Fulmer, manager of cyber intelligence engineering at Deep Instinct, called Cloud9 "a relatively nasty RAT" which, aside from using cycles on a machine to mine crypto, can deliver second-stage malware. Fulmer said it's unique in the way it could be included as a part of a malicious executable, but also run as a standalone, delivered-to-machine via remote and executed.</p> <p>"The second part is the most dangerous and plays on something widely talked about in the security world — clicking on suspicious links," Fulmer said. "All that's needed is the malicious javascript file to be</p>

	embedded on a site with scripting hooks, and you could easily weaponize any site you like. What if someone gained access to a large search engine like Google and embedded the script at the very end of the page, how many people could they impact and how wide of a net could they cast on gaining access to environments by harvesting credentials?"
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HEADLINE	11/09 Officials: no hacks affected vote counting
SOURCE	https://www.securityweek.com/no-cyberattacks-affected-us-vote-counting-officials-say
GIST	<p>No instances of digital interference are known to have affected the counting of the midterm vote after a tense Election Day in which officials were closely monitoring domestic and foreign threats.</p> <p>A few state and local governments appeared to be hit by a relatively rudimentary form of cyberattack that periodically made public websites unreachable. But U.S. and local officials said Wednesday that none breached vote-counting infrastructure.</p> <p>“We have seen no evidence that any voting system deleted or lost votes, changed votes, or was any way compromised in any race in the country,” Jen Easterly, director of the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency, said in a statement.</p> <p>CISA and other federal agencies had warned that safeguarding U.S. elections has become more complex than ever, with the most serious threats from domestic sources. Foreign adversaries such as Russia, China, and Iran have tried to meddle in individual campaigns and amplify false or misleading narratives on social media.</p> <p>Many members of an increasingly fractious American public have latched onto unproven conspiracies about voter fraud. And there are constant fears that state-sponsored intruders or criminals might try to interfere with voter rolls or steal data for ransom. Also of concern are increasing physical and online threats to election workers.</p> <p>Votes are still being counted throughout the country and winners have not been projected in some key races that will decide control of the House and Senate.</p> <p>“It’s important to remember that this thorough and deliberative process can take days or weeks, depending on state laws; these rigorous procedures are why the American people can have confidence in the security and integrity of the election,” Easterly said in a statement.</p> <p>The website of Mississippi’s secretary of state was down for part of Tuesday and there were other reports of sites becoming unreachable throughout the country, including in Champaign County, Illinois, and parts of Arkansas.</p> <p>They were all apparently hit with a “distributed denial of service,” in which a website is flooded with inauthentic traffic to cause it to crash. Federal and state officials said they could not say who was responsible for the Mississippi attack or other denial of service incidents, though a pro-Russia group had called on the social media platform Telegram for its followers to target the site.</p> <p>“While attribution is inherently difficult, we’ve not seen any evidence to suggest that these are part of a widespread coordinated campaign,” said one official at CISA, the cybersecurity arm of Department of Homeland Security, in a briefing Tuesday. The official spoke on condition of anonymity under rules set by the agency.</p> <p>Republican state Sen. Scott DeLano of Mississippi is a legislative adviser for the state Department of Information Technology Services. He told The Associated Press on Wednesday that Mississippi government websites typically face “hundreds, if not thousands” of attempted intrusions daily — nothing unusual in today’s online world.</p>

	<p>The site's inaccessibility meant, for example, that residents could not use the site's information about the location of voting precincts. DeLano said the secretary of state keeps a separate database for statewide voter registration information and that was not affected by the attack. Same-day election results are not posted on the Mississippi secretary of state's site, so those also were not affected.</p> <p>In a statement, Secretary of State Michael Watson credited technology staff who "worked diligently to ensure that Mississippi's election was secure, and through their hard work, we can confidently say our election system was not compromised."</p> <p>"We will continue to work ... to ensure, as cyber attacks strengthen in frequency and intellect, we are prepared and have the necessary resources to combat any and all attacks," Watson said.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/10 Supply chain breach: 98% in 2021
SOURCE	https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/98-global-firms-supply-chain/
GIST	<p>Just 2% of global organizations didn't suffer a supply chain breach last year, with visibility into cyber risk getting harder as these ecosystems expand, according to BlueVoyant.</p> <p>The security firm polled 2100 C-level execs with responsibility for supply chain and cyber risk management from companies with 1000+ employees to compile its study, <i>The State of Supply Chain Defense: Annual Global Insights Report 2022</i>.</p> <p>It found the top challenges listed by respondents were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness internally that third-party suppliers are part of their cybersecurity posture • Meeting regulatory requirements and ensuring third-party cybersecurity compliance • Working with third-party suppliers to improve their posture <p>Supply chains are growing: the number of firms with over 1000 suppliers increased from 38% in 2021's report to 50%.</p> <p>Although 53% of organizations audited or reported on supplier security more than twice annually, 40% still rely on suppliers to ensure security levels are sufficient. That means they have no way of knowing if an issue arises with a supplier.</p> <p>Worse, 42% admitted that if they do discover an issue in their supply chain and inform their supplier, they cannot verify that the issue was resolved.</p> <p>Just 3% monitor their supply chain daily, although the number of respondents using security ratings services to enhance visibility and reduce cyber risk increased from 36% last year to 39% in this year's report.</p> <p>"With the escalating threat landscape and number of high-profile incidents being reported, I would recommend firms focus more strategically on addressing supply chain cyber security risk. In the current volatile economic climate, the last thing any business needs is any further disruption to their operations, any unexpected costs, or negative impact on their brand," argued BlueVoyant UK managing director, James McDowell.</p> <p>"While a higher proportion of firms say this is a priority, there is still a significant percentage who appear to be completely unaware of the risks in their supply chains. In today's interconnected ecosystem, a risk to a supplier is a risk to your own business, therefore relying on vendors to mitigate without any oversight or control leaves organizations vulnerable."</p>
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HEADLINE	11/09 Massive Google SEO poisoning campaign
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SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/15-000-sites-hacked-for-massive-google-seo-poisoning-campaign/
GIST	<p>Hackers are conducting a massive black hat search engine optimization (SEO) campaign by compromising almost 15,000 websites to redirect visitors to fake Q&A discussion forums.</p> <p>The attacks were first spotted by Sucuri, who says that each compromised site contains approximately 20,000 files used as part of the search engine spam campaign, with most of the sites being WordPress.</p> <p>The researchers believe the threat actors' goal is to generate enough indexed pages to increase the fake Q&A sites' authority and thus rank better in search engines.</p> <p>The campaign likely primes these sites for future use as malware droppers or phishing sites, as even a short-term operation on the first page of Google Search, would result in many infections.</p> <p>An alternative scenario, based on the existence of an 'ads.txt' file on the landing sites, is that their owners want to drive more traffic to conduct ad fraud.</p> <p>Targeting WordPress sites</p> <p>Sucuri reports that the hackers are modifying WordPress PHP files, such as 'wp-singup.php', 'wp-cron.php', 'wp-settings.php', 'wp-mail.php', and 'wp-blog-header.php', to inject the redirects to the fakes Q&A discussion forums.</p> <p>In some cases, the attackers drop their own PHP files on the targeted site, using random or pseudo-legitimate file names like 'wp-logIn.php'.</p> <p>The infected or injected files contain malicious code that checks if the website visitors are logged in to WordPress, and if they're not, redirects them to the https://ois.is/images/logo-6.png URL.</p> <p>However, browsers will not be sent an image from this URL but will instead have JavaScript loaded that redirects users to a Google search click URL that redirects users to the promoted Q&A site.</p> <p>Using a Google search click URL is likely to increase performance metrics on the URLs in the Google Index to make it appear as if the sites are popular, hoping to increase their ranking in the search results. Furthermore, redirecting through Google search click URLs makes the traffic look more legitimate, possibly bypassing some security software.</p> <p>The exclusion of logged-in users, as well as those standing at 'wp-login.php,' aims to avoid redirecting an administrator of the site, which would result in the raising of suspicion and the cleaning of the compromised site.</p> <p>The PNG image file uses the 'window.location.href' function to generate the Google Search redirection result to one of the following targeted domains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ en.w4ksa[.]com ▪ peace.yomeat[.]com ▪ qa.bb7r[.]com ▪ en.ajeel[.]store ▪ qa.istisharaat[.]com ▪ en.photolovegirl[.]com ▪ en.poxnel[.]com ▪ qa.tadalafilhot[.]com ▪ questions.rawafedpor[.]com ▪ qa.elbwaba[.]com ▪ questions.firstgooal[.]com ▪ qa.cr-halal[.]com ▪ qa.aly2um[.]com

	<p>The threat actors use multiple subdomains for the above, so the complete list of the landing domains is too long to include here (1,137 entries). Those interested in reviewing the complete list can find it here.</p> <p>Most of these websites hide their servers behind Cloudflare, so Sucuri's analysts couldn't learn more about the campaign's operators.</p> <p>As all of the sites use similar website-building templates, and all appear to have been generated by automated tools, it is likely they all belong to the same threat actors.</p> <p>Sucuri couldn't identify how the threat actors breached the websites used for redirections. However, it likely happens by exploiting a vulnerable plugin or brute-forcing the WordPress admin password.</p> <p>Hence, the recommendation is to upgrade all WordPress plugins and website CMS to the latest version and activate two-factor authentication (2FA) on admin accounts.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/09 New Chinese APT 'Earth Longzhi'
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/new-hacking-group-uses-custom-symatic-cobalt-strike-loaders/
GIST	<p>A previously unknown Chinese APT (advanced persistent threat) hacking group dubbed 'Earth Longzhi' targets organizations in East Asia, Southeast Asia, and Ukraine.</p> <p>The threat actors have been active since at least 2020, using custom versions of Cobalt Strike loaders to plant persistent backdoors on victims' systems.</p> <p>According to a new Trend Micro report, Earth Longzhi has similar TTP (techniques, tactics, and procedures) as 'Earth Baku,' both considered subgroups of the state-backed hacking group tracked as APT41.</p> <p>Earth Longzhi's older campaign</p> <p>Trend Micro's report illustrates two campaigns conducted by Earth Longzhi, with the first occurring between May 2020 and February 2021.</p> <p>During that time, the hackers attacked several infrastructure companies in Taiwan, a bank in China, and a government organization in Taiwan.</p> <p>In this campaign, the hackers used the custom Cobalt Strike loader 'Symatic,' which features a sophisticated anti-detection system including the following functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remove API hooks from 'ntdll.dll,' get raw file content, and replace the in-memory ntdll image with a copy not monitored by security tools. ▪ Spawn a new process for process injection and masquerade the parent process to obfuscate the chain. ▪ Inject a decrypted payload into the newly created process. <p>For its primary operations, Earth Longzhi used an all-in-one hacking tool that combined various publicly available tools under a single package.</p> <p>This tool can open a Socks5 proxy, perform password scans on MS SQL servers, disable Windows file protection, modify file timestamps, scan ports, launch new processes, perform RID spoofing, enumerate drives, and execute commands with 'SQLExecDirect.'</p> <p>2022 campaign</p> <p>The second campaign observed by Trend Micro lasted from August 2021 until June 2022, targeting insurance and urban development firms in the Philippines and aviation firms in Thailand and Taiwan.</p>

	<p>In these more recent attacks, Earth Longzhi deployed a new set of custom Cobalt Strike loaders that used different decryption algorithms and additional features for performance (multi-threading) and effectiveness (decoy documents).</p> <p>The injection of the Cobalt Strike payload into a newly created process running in memory remains the same as in Symatic, never touching the disk to avoid risking detection.</p> <p>Commodity + custom</p> <p>APT groups increasingly rely on commodity malware and attack frameworks like Cobalt Strike to obscure their trace and make attribution difficult.</p> <p>However, the sophisticated hackers still develop and use custom tools for stealthy payload loading and to bypass security software.</p> <p>By following these tactics, Earth Longzhi has managed to stay undetected for at least 2.5 years now, and following this exposure by Trend Micro, they are likely to switch to new tactics.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/09 New 'StrelaStealer' info-stealing malware
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/new-strelastealer-malware-steals-your-outlook-thunderbird-accounts/
GIST	<p>A new information-stealing malware named 'StrelaStealer' is actively stealing email account credentials from Outlook and Thunderbird, two widely used email clients.</p> <p>This behavior deviates from most info-stealers, which attempt to steal data from various data sources, including browsers, cryptocurrency wallet apps, cloud gaming apps, the clipboard, etc.</p> <p>The previously unknown malware was discovered by analysts at DCSO CyTec, who report that they first saw it in the wild in early November 2022, targeting Spanish-speaking users.</p> <p>Polyglot file infection</p> <p>StrelaStealer arrives on the victim's system via email attachments, currently ISO files with varying content.</p> <p>In one example, the ISO contains an executable ('msinfo32.exe') that sideloads the bundled malware via DLL order hijacking.</p> <p>In a more interesting case seen by the analysts, the ISO contains an LNK file ('Factura.lnk') and an HTML file ('x.html'). The x.html file is of particular interest because it is a polyglot file, which is a file that can be treated as different file formats depending on the application that opens it.</p> <p>In this case, x.html is both an HTML file and a DLL program that can load the StrelaStealer malware or display a decoy document in the default web browser.</p> <p>When the Fractura.lnk file is executed, it will execute x.html twice, first using rundll32.exe to run the embedded StrelaStealer DLL and another time as HTML to load the decoy document in the browser...</p> <p>Once the malware is loaded in memory, the default browser is opened to show the decoy to make the attack less suspicious.</p> <p>StrelaStealer details</p> <p>Upon execution, StrelaStealer searches the '%APPDATA%\Thunderbird\Profiles\' directory for 'logins.json' (account and password) and 'key4.db' (password database) and exfiltrates their contents to the C2 server.</p>

	<p>For Outlook, StrelaStealer reads the Windows Registry to retrieve the software's key and then locates the 'IMAP User', 'IMAP Server', and 'IMAP Password' values.</p> <p>The IMAP Password contains the user password in encrypted form, so the malware uses the Windows CryptUnprotectData function to decrypt it before it's exfiltrated to the C2 along with the server and user details.</p> <p>Finally, StrelaStealer validates that the C2 received the data by checking for a specific response and quits when it receives it. Otherwise, it enters a 1-second sleep and retries this data-theft routine.</p> <p>Since the malware is spread using Spanish-language lures and focuses on very specific software, it may be used in highly targeted attacks. However, DCSO CyTec couldn't determine more about its distribution.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/09 IPFS gets increasingly weaponized
SOURCE	https://www.darkreading.com/vulnerabilities-threats/use-of-interplanetary-file-system-for-phishing-malware-distribution-is-growing
GIST	<p>As has happened with other Web technologies designed for legitimate use, the InterPlanetary File System (IPFS) peer-to-peer network for storing and accessing content in a decentralized fashion has become a potent new weapon for cyberattacks.</p> <p>Researchers from Cisco Talos this week reported observing multiple malicious campaigns leveraging the IPFS to host phishing kits and malware payloads. For many attackers, the IPFS has become the equivalent of a bulletproof hosting provider that is mostly impervious to takedown efforts, Talos said. Complicating matters for defenders is the fact that the IPFS is often used for legitimate purposes. So, differentiating between benign and malicious IPFS activity is another challenge, the security vendor said.</p> <p>"Organizations should become familiar with these new technologies and how they are being leveraged by threat actors to defend against new techniques that use them," Talos said in a report summarizing the threat.</p> <p>Growing Threat</p> <p>This marks at least the second time in recent months that researchers have sounded the alarm on IPFS becoming a hotbed of cybercrime activity.</p> <p>In July, Trustwave's SpiderLabs noted how its researchers had identified more than 3,000 emails with phishing URLs hosted in the IPFS in a three-month period. Phishing pages that it observed on the IPFS included those that spoofed Microsoft Outlook login pages, Google domains and cloud storage services such as Filebase.io and nftstorage.link. "Phishing techniques have taken a leap by utilizing the concept of decentralized cloud services using IPFS," Trustwave said. The growing use of IPFS by many file storage, Web hosting, and cloud service companies means that attackers have a lot more flexibility in creating new phishing URLs that cannot be easily blocked, the security vendor said.</p> <p>IPFS is a peer-to-peer file sharing system that Protocol Labs launched in 2015. The network is designed to allow decentralized storage of content. Content stored in the IPFS is mirrored across multiple nodes, or systems that participate in the network. Individuals and others can use IPFS to store different types of data including webpages, files, NFTs, and documents.</p> <p>Resources stored on the IPFS are assigned unique identifiers. Users can employ the identifier to access the content via IPFS clients or gateways, which are like gateways for accessing content on the Tor network. Because content is mirrored on IPFS, it is always available even if one node goes down.</p> <p>This has made the IPFS an attractive option for hosting phishing kits and malware for cybercriminals. Because content on the IPFS does not have a static IP address, it cannot be blocked using standard IP blocking and blacklisting mechanisms. Similarly, taking down a node containing phishing pages and malware does little to neutralize a threat because the content is mirrored across multiple nodes. There is</p>

also no central authority on the IPFS that law enforcement or security vendors can contact to take down a phishing or malware distributing site.

In an example of how attackers are abusing IPFS, Talos pointed to a phishing campaign in which victims receive an email with an attached PDF that purports to be associated with the DocuSign document signing service. When a user clicks on the "Review Document" link, they are directed to a webpage that appears to be a legitimate Microsoft authentication page but is really a credential-harvesting page hosted on the IPFS network.

In situations where an IPFS gateway might recognize the resource being requested as malicious and block access, attacker simply change the IPFS gateway that is used to retrieve the content, Talos said.

Phishing Not the Only Threat

Phishing pages are not the only threat. A growing number of attackers are also leveraging the peer-to-peer network to distribute malicious payloads.

In one campaign that Talos researchers observed, the attacker sent victims a phishing email with a ZIP attachment containing a malware dropper in the form of a PE32 executable. When run, the downloader would reach out to an IPFS gateway and retrieve a second-stage malware payload hosted on the peer-to-peer network. The attack chain ended with the Agent Tesla remote-access Trojan getting dropped on the victim's system.

Talos researchers also found a destructive, disk-wiping malware tool and a full-featured information-stealer called Hannabi Grabber hosted in IPFS nodes.

"Many new Web3 technologies have emerged recently, attempting to provide valuable functionality to users," Talos said in the report. "As these technologies have continued to see increased adoption for legitimate purposes, they have begun to be leveraged by adversaries as well."

The researchers expect the trend to gain momentum as more threat actors realize the IPFS is resilient to content moderation and takedown efforts.

"Organizations should be aware of how these newly emerging technologies are being actively used across the threat landscape and evaluate how to best implement security controls to prevent or detect successful attacks in their environments," the vendor said.

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HEADLINE	11/09 Spyware vendor exploits Samsung flaws
SOURCE	https://www.securityweek.com/google-reveals-spyware-vendors-use-samsung-phone-zero-day-exploits?&web_view=true
GIST	<p>Google Project Zero has disclosed the details of three Samsung phone vulnerabilities that have been exploited by a spyware vendor since when they still had a zero-day status.</p> <p>The flaws, tracked as CVE-2021-25337, CVE-2021-25369 and CVE-2021-25370, have been chained and exploited against Android phones, but they impact custom Samsung components. The security holes have been described as an arbitrary file read/write issue via a custom clipboard content provider, a kernel information leak, and a use-after-free in the display processing unit driver.</p> <p>“All three vulnerabilities in this chain were in the manufacturer’s custom components rather than in the AOSP platform or the Linux kernel. It’s also interesting to note that 2 out of the 3 vulnerabilities were logic and design vulnerabilities rather than memory safety,” explained Google Project Zero’s Maddie Stone.</p>

Google's researchers have not identified the application used to deliver the exploit or the final payload deployed by the attacker. However, they determined that the vulnerabilities have been used to write a malicious file to the targeted device, bypass security mechanisms, and obtain kernel read and write access.

Google reported the vulnerabilities to Samsung in late 2020, when it found exploit samples. The tech giant released [patches](#) in March 2021.

According to Google, the kernel versions targeted by the exploit were running on Samsung S10, A50 and A51 smartphones in late 2020.

Google's Threat Analysis Group believes the exploit has been [developed by a commercial surveillance vendor](#). While that vendor has not been named, Google noted that the method used for initial code execution via an application is similar to other campaigns, including one targeting [Apple and Android smartphones in Italy and Kazakhstan](#), which has been linked to Italian company RCS Lab.

Google is aware of half a dozen other Samsung vulnerabilities with 2021 CVE identifiers that have been exploited in attacks, but details have yet to be disclosed.

The US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) on Tuesday added the three Samsung vulnerabilities to its [known exploited vulnerabilities catalog](#), instructing government agencies to patch them until November 29.

Project Zero pointed out that Samsung's advisories still do not mention in-the-wild exploitation of these vulnerabilities, but the vendor has allegedly promised that in the future it will warn customers when malicious exploitation is detected.

"Labeling when vulnerabilities are known to be exploited in-the-wild is important both for targeted users and for the security industry. When in-the-wild 0-days are not transparently disclosed, we are not able to use that information to further protect users, using patch analysis and variant analysis, to gain an understanding of what attackers already know," Stone said.

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HEADLINE	11/10 Ransomware gangs, malware campaigns
SOURCE	https://www.helpnetsecurity.com/2022/11/10/malware-ransomware-trends/?web_view=true
GIST	<p>Deep Instinct released its 2022 Bi-Annual Cyber Threat Report which focuses on the top malware and ransomware trends and tactics from the first half of 2022 and provides key takeaways and predictions for the ever-evolving cybersecurity threat landscape.</p> <p>"2022 has been another record year for cyber criminals and ransomware gangs. It's no secret that these threat actors are constantly upping their game with new and improved tactics designed to evade traditional cyber defenses," said Mark Vaitzman, Threat Lab Team Leader at Deep Instinct.</p> <p>Malware and ransomware trends in H1 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes in threat actor structure: Some of the most prevalent activities observed include changes within the world of ransomware gangs, including LockBit, Hive, BlackCat, and Conti. The latter has spawned "Conti Splinters" made up of Quantum, BlackBasta, and BlackByte. These three prominent former affiliate groups to the Conti operation emerged under their own operations following the decline of Conti.• Malware campaigns in flux: The report highlights the reasons behind significant changes to Emotet, Agent Tesla, NanoCore, and others. For example, Emotet uses highly obfuscated VBA macros to avoid detection.• As Microsoft shuts down one avenue, bad actors open others: Researchers found that the use of documents for malware has decreased as the prior number one attack vector, following Microsoft's move to disable macros by default in Microsoft Office files. Threat actors have

already been seen shifting gears and implementing other methods to deploy their malware, such as LNK, HTML, and archive email attachments.

- **Major exploitable vulnerabilities:** Vulnerabilities such as SpoolFool, Follina, and DirtyPipe highlighted the exploitability of both Windows and Linux systems despite efforts to enhance their security. Analysis of CISA's published known exploited vulnerability catalog suggests that the number of exploited in-the-wild vulnerabilities spikes every 3-4 months and we're expecting the next spike as we get closer to the end of the year.
- **Data exfiltration attacks are now extending to third parties:** Threat actor groups are utilizing [data exfiltration](#) within their attack flows in order to demand ransom for the leaked data. In the case of sensitive data exfiltration, there are less remediation options so many threat actors are going even further and demanding ransoms from third-party companies if the leaked data contains their sensitive information.

Not surprisingly, ransomware attacks remain a serious threat to organizations, as there are currently 17 leaked databases operated by threat actors who are leveraging the data for attacks on third-party companies, most notably social engineering, credential theft, and triple-extortion attacks.

Three specific predictions

- **Insiders and affiliate programs:** Malicious threat actors look for the weakest link. With continued innovations in cybersecurity some threat actors choose to locate either weak targets or simply pay an insider. Groups like Lapsus\$ do not rely on exploits but instead look for [insiders](#) who are willing to sell access to data within their organization.
- **Protestware on the rise:** There is an increase in the trending phenomenon of protestware, which can be defined as self-sabotaging one's software and weaponizing it with malware capabilities in an effort to harm all or some of its users. The war between Russia and Ukraine caused a surge in protestware, with the most notable example being the node-ipc wiper, a popular NPM package. It's not easy to spot such supply chain attacks, and they are usually detected only after affecting several victims.
- **End-of-year attacks:** While we have not yet heard of a major vulnerability in 2022 similar to the Log4J or the Exchange cases in 2021; there is an increase year-over-year in the number of publicly assigned CVEs for reported vulnerabilities. Threat actors are still exploiting old vulnerabilities during 2022 simply because there is a plethora of unpatched systems for 2021 CVEs.

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HEADLINE	11/09 Twitter users cause Mastodon meltdown
SOURCE	https://www.wired.com/story/twitter-users-mastodon-meltdown/
GIST	<p>FOSSTODON is an online community where people chat about open source tech. They talk about VR and tech gear, but they also post pictures of changing autumn leaves and pets. It's been a small, tight-knit community for five years ever since its founders moved from Google+ to Mastodon.</p> <p>But on Monday, it went offline. The culprit was an influx of new users spurred by Elon Musk's Twitter takeover, forcing Fosstodon to migrate its data to a larger server.</p> <p>Since Musk bought the bird app last month, users are looking for ways to access Mastodon, the open source microblogging platform that isn't quite Twitter but seems to be the closest thing to it, and they're signing up for its many servers in droves. And Fosstodon, whose usership has grown from a list of about 3,000 active members to an unwieldy 40,000 total members, is far from the only server on the network to run into trouble.</p> <p>"We can't keep up with those requests, so we just opened the floodgates," says Mike Stone, cofounder of Fosstodon. "My concern right now is the people that are coming in don't understand the point of Fosstodon specifically, as opposed to the greater Mastodon environment."</p> <p>The decentralized social platform, which has served a smaller niche since its founding in 2016, had 381,113 active users as of October 28. On November 7, the company's founder Eugen Rochko "tooted" (the term for posting short messages on Mastodon) that the network had hit more than 1 million active</p>

users. That meant 1,124 new servers and 489,003 new users. Musk also says Twitter's daily growth [hit all time highs](#) during his first week at the helm, hinting that the great Twitter migration might be much smaller than expected, but Bot Sentinel estimated that more than 1 million accounts have been deleted or deactivated in that time. The outcome could have implications for how well decentralized tech works for the masses.

As Twitter has a public meltdown, Mastodon is having a quieter one. Its decentralized nature appeals to those who hate Musk's unilateral control over Twitter, but that key feature is also working against it—Mastodon was not prepared to host millions of people in a short span of time. Some of the most popular servers that feed users into the network are overloaded with the fury of new activity, and volunteer administrators of the more than 4,000 instances, or servers, cannot keep up with new user requests to join and the volume of posts. Plus, new users are hitting a steep learning curve.

“What the platform owners and the instance administrators need to make sure is, it's somehow sustainable,” says Aravindh Raman, an internet measurements researcher with the telecommunications company Telefónica who has studied Mastodon.

Several of the popular instances, like [mstdn.social](#) and [mastodon.social](#), could no longer accept new signups this week. People do not need to be in these popular servers to access the network, but finding and applying to join an alternative takes some digging. People still stuck on Twitter complained about not receiving verification emails to get their Mastodon accounts up and running.

Rochko says he was too busy this week working on Mastodon to comment about the overloaded servers, and how the massive amount of new users had affected the network. The Mastodon founder [posted](#) that he had changed parts of how people sign up for new servers, allowing new users to filter by region, sign-up speed, and type. By November 8, he [said](#) he had fixed delayed feeds on two of the bigger servers.

Downtime on the decentralized network isn't a new issue. Raman's research looked at downtime on Mastodon in 2019 and found servers had been inaccessible about 10 percent of the time. It's a frustration reminiscent of Twitter's fail whale days. But even in Twitter's early days, Raman says, it went offline only about 1.25 percent of the time.

Some of these growing pains come from users expecting that Mastodon will work with the same ease as products funded by Big Tech companies, but the nature of a volunteer-driven network means Mastodon can't respond to crises like they do.

“People are trained not to be patient. We expect to pop in, sign up, and we're onboarded,” says Robert Gehl, a professor of communication and media studies at York University in Canada, who has studied Mastodon. “This is a little bit more complicated. But in the long run, for people who are interested in a more community-oriented space, I think it is very much worth it.”

Part of Mastodon's appeal is in hosting smaller communities, where moderators have rules and can regulate hate speech better than on some larger platforms. But with larger servers overwhelmed, people are applying for and flooding smaller ones, reshaping the communities that have grown there. Still, Stone and fellow cofounder Kev Quirk say they are excited about the diversity of opinion and topics coming in the conversations.

Fosstodon has seen its traffic increase tenfold since late October, says Quirk, and managing it has become a second full-time job over the past week. It saw increased interest even in April, when news of Musk's agreement to buy Twitter first broke. “That nearly brought us to our knees,” says Quirk. “It's been nothing compared to this.”

Jerry Bell, who runs the security-focused instance [infosec.exchange](#) on Mastodon, says his server saw challenges over the weekend as its users jumped from around 180 active users to some 8,000. On Monday, Bell posted a toot looking for volunteers to help him with security, support, and moderation on the instance.

“This has been a really big struggle because a lot of people are doing this as a hobby,” says Bell. “The pace with which things changed forced a lot of people to figure out how to react really fast.”

But Bell says the new users have also ushered in more substantive discussions on his instance. The small community was not always the most active. Already, he’s seen that change as more people from the security world join. And, Bell says, volunteers who want to help are pouring in already.

Mastodon’s meltdown may be short-lived. But that depends largely on instance runners expanding their efforts to host more users, and on users having the patience to navigate the network. The model for decentralized social media isn’t really new—it’s more a return to the old internet. And for some, that’s a welcome change.

“What’s happening now is causing people to rethink social media,” says Gehl. Mastodon “is kind of designed to adapt, because it’s comprised of all these different servers,” he says. “It just takes a little time to shake out.”

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HEADLINE	11/09 Binance pulls out of FTX merger deal
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/nov/09/ftx-binance-merger-crypto-price-falls
GIST	<p>Cryptocurrency prices plunged for a second straight day on Wednesday after crypto exchange platform Binance announced it was pulling out of its deal to purchase its failing rival FTX Trading.</p> <p>Bitcoin sank to a two-year low after Binance confirmed earlier rumors and news reports that it was ready to back out of the FTX deal, struck between the CEOs of the two exchanges on Tuesday. The deal was pending Binance’s due diligence on FTX’s balance sheet.</p> <p>After an initial review, Binance said in a statement Wednesday that it had significant concerns that convinced it to back out of the deal.</p> <p>“In the beginning, our hope was to be able to support FTX’s customers to provide liquidity, but the issues are beyond our control or ability to help,” Binance said in a statement.</p> <p>The price of bitcoin plunged more than 13% to \$15,840, according to CoinDesk, its lowest level since November 2020. It had been above \$20,000 earlier in the week. The other major cryptocurrency, Ethereum, dropped 13%.</p> <p>FTX had agreed to sell itself to Binance after experiencing the cryptocurrency equivalent of a bank run. Customers fled the exchange after becoming concerned about whether FTX had sufficient capital. The sudden sale was a shocking turn of events for Bankman-Fried, who was hailed as somewhat of a savior earlier this year when he helped shore up a number of cryptocurrency companies that ran into financial trouble.</p> <p>FTX’s own crypto token, known as FTT, plunged more than 50% on the reports. The token, now worth around \$2.50, was worth 10 times that amount only a week ago.</p> <p>Many of crypto investors’ concerns centered on whether the balance sheet of an affiliated company of FTX known as Alameda Research was saturated with increasingly worthless FTT tokens, whose total value would not exceed the exchange’s liabilities, effectively making FTX insolvent.</p> <p>To further illustrate FTX’s financial straits, Bankman-Fried asked his investors Wednesday for \$8bn to cover withdrawal requests, according to the Wall Street Journal, citing unnamed sources.</p> <p>FTX is now reportedly under investigation by US authorities for how it handled customers’ deposits, according to Bloomberg News and other media outlets.</p>

	<p>Shares of publicly traded exchanges exposed to crypto also plunged on the news. Robinhood shares closed down roughly 14% and Coinbase shares lost around 10%.</p> <p>FTX is the latest cryptocurrency company this year to come under financial pressure as crypto assets have collapsed in value. Other failures include Celsius, a bank-like company that took in crypto deposits in exchange for yield, as well as an Asia-based hedge fund known as Three Arrows Capital.</p>
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Terrorism, Extremism

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HEADLINE	11/10 Taliban official: women banned from gyms
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/afghanistan-religion-womens-rights-taliban-177fd5045f692b2572b0f202d25c4d3a
GIST	<p>KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — The Taliban are banning women from using gyms in Afghanistan, an official in Kabul said Thursday, the religious group's latest edict cracking down on women's rights and freedoms since they took power more than a year ago.</p> <p>The Taliban overran the country last year, seizing power in August 2021. They have banned girls from middle school and high school, despite initial promises to the contrary, restricted women from most fields of employment, and ordered them to wear head-to-toe clothing in public.</p> <p>A spokesman from the Ministry of Virtue and Vice said the ban was being introduced because people were ignoring gender segregation orders and that women were not wearing the required headscarf, or hijab. Women are also banned from parks.</p> <p>The ban on women using gyms and parks came into force this week, according to Mohammed Akef Mohajer, a Taliban-appointed spokesman for the Ministry of Vice and Virtue.</p> <p>The group has "tried its best" over the past 15 months to avoid closing parks and gyms for women, ordering separate days of the week for male and female access or imposing gender segregation, he said.</p> <p>"But, unfortunately, the orders were not obeyed and the rules were violated, and we had to close parks and gyms for women," said Mahjer. "In most cases, we have seen both men and women together in parks and, unfortunately, the hijab was not observed. So we had to come up with another decision and for now we ordered all parks and gyms to be closed for women."</p> <p>Taliban teams will begin monitoring establishments to check if women are still using them, he said.</p> <p>The U.N. special representative in Afghanistan for women, Alison Davidian, condemned the ban. "This is yet another example of the Taliban's continued and systematic erasure of women from public life," she said. "We call on the Taliban to reinstate all rights and freedoms for women and girls."</p> <p>Hard-liners appear to hold sway in the Taliban-led administration, which struggles to govern and remains internationally isolated. An economic downturn has driven millions more Afghans into poverty and hunger as the flow of foreign aid has slowed to a trickle.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/09 Somalia retakes key town from al-Shabab
SOURCE	https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20221109-somalia-retakes-key-town-controlled-by-al-shabaab-for-over-15-years/
GIST	Somalia's military has captured a strategic town in the central Galgaduud region that was controlled by the Al-Shabaab terrorist group for more than 15 years, <i>Anadolu News Agency</i> reports.

	<p>The town of Wabho was retaken as part of an ongoing new offensive against the terrorist group, Defence Ministry spokesperson, Gen. Abdullahi Ali Aanod, said at a news conference on Wednesday.</p> <p>The Somali army, with the support of local militias, captured some 250 square kilometres (96 square miles) of territory in Galgaduud, including the villages of Warhole, Elbore and Elgorof, he added.</p> <p>Ahmed Abdikarim, a security analyst in the capital, Mogadishu, said Wabho's economic importance makes its loss a "huge blow" for Al-Shabaab.</p> <p>"Wabho is a strategic area that has a lot of villages and a significant population. This is a huge blow for Al-Shabaab, particularly financially," he told <i>Anadolu Agency</i>.</p> <p>Somalia has been plagued by insecurity for years, with Al-Shabaab being one of the main threats in the Horn of Africa country.</p> <p>Since at least 2007, Al-Shabaab has waged a deadly campaign against the Somali government and international forces that has claimed thousands of lives.</p> <p>The UN has also warned of growing instability in the country, with its periodic reports on Somalia this year detailing attacks by Al-Shabaab and pro-Daesh groups.</p> <p>There were at least 1,518 civilian casualties – 651 killed and 867 injured – in terrorist attacks in Somalia in 2018, followed by 1,459 – 591 killed and 868 injured – in 2019, according to the UN in Somalia.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/10 US sanctions 2 men: links to AQ facilitator
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2022/11/10/United-States-sanctions-al-Qaida-businessmen/6201668056382/
GIST	<p>Nov. 10 (UPI) -- The Biden administration has blacklisted two associates connected to a jailed Australian-based businessman who has been sanctioned by the United States on accusations of being an al-Qaida facilitator.</p> <p>The departments of State and Treasury on Wednesday announced asset freezes against two men connected to Ahmed Luqman Talib, whom the United States sanctioned in 2020 and the Australian authorities arrested in March 2021 on charges of plotting incursions into foreign states for the purpose of engaging in hostile activities.</p> <p>The United States has accused Talib of using his Melbourne gemstones company to provide al-Qaida with moving people and finances around the world to further the militant group's objectives. Al-Qaida was designated a foreign terrorist organization by the United States in 1999.</p> <p>On Wednesday, the Biden administration hit two of Talib's business partners -- his brother-in-law Musad Turkmen, who lives in Turkey, and Sri Lankan-based businessman Mohamad Irshad Mohamad Haris Nizar -- with sanctions.</p> <p>Treasury officials said Nizar and Talib have been business partners in Sri Lanka since at least 2018. Together, their dealings have generated nearly \$200,000 a year in profits.</p> <p>Turkmen is similarly accused of having land investments in Turkey with Talib since at least the end of 2018, the officials said.</p> <p>"Treasury is taking this action to further disrupt a transnational al-Qaida financial facilitation and operational plotting network," Brian Nelson, under secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence said in a statement.</p>

	The sanctions imposed Wednesday also bar U.S. citizens from doing business with the designated men.
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HEADLINE	11/09 Somali al-Shabab widening revenue base
SOURCE	https://www.voanews.com/a/somalia-s-al-shabab-militants-widening-revenue-base-/6827225.html
GIST	<p>MOGADISHU — U.N. experts say the Somali Islamist militant group al-Shabab has widened its revenue stream beyond its traditional activities, like charging tolls at checkpoints, to illegally taxing properties and construction.</p> <p>In a new report, made public this month, U.N. experts say the terrorist group is seeking more funds to pay about \$1 million per month in salaries to its fighters. The report says despite Somalia's crackdown on al-Shabab, the militants are also able to move funds through local and Islamic banks.</p> <p>A Somali woman who declined to be named for security reasons told VOA that al-Shabab militants demanded she pay \$425 this year in so-called taxes for a house she bought almost three years ago in Mogadishu.</p> <p>She said a man called her on the phone and summoned her to an al-Shabab court outside Elasha-boyaha, in Lower Shabelle region. She traveled there, and met a crowd of people from Mogadishu who were also summoned by the court. She said nobody dares to defy the group's orders because people get killed.</p> <p>The U.N. experts' report says al-Shabab in May issued a notice to households of annual charges between \$100 and \$300 for iron sheet, stone, and multi-story houses. The report says the group also extorts owners of buildings and homes being constructed around Mogadishu at about 25 percent of the value of the development.</p> <p>VOA spoke to four Mogadishu residents who paid al-Shabab the illegal property tax between May and July this year, including one who paid an additional \$120 fine because of delayed payment.</p> <p>None of them would give their names out of fear of the militants.</p> <p>Funding key</p> <p>Abdisalam Guled, a former Somali deputy intelligence chief and co-founder of Mogadishu-based security firm Eagle Ranges Services, said cutting off al-Shabab's funding is key to winning the war against the militants.</p> <p>He said there is no doubt that the group gets taxes from the capital and the port, and the government should come up with plans to deal with the issues. People do not pay money to al-Shabab because they love it, he added, they pay because of fear.</p> <p>The government needs the confidence of the Somali people because the people know where al-Shabab gets its income and the companies that are supporting the group, Guled said.</p> <p>Somalia's government has warned against paying illegal taxes and fees to al-Shabab, but Somalis say authorities cannot guarantee their security if they do not pay.</p> <p>Guled said al-Shabab has embedded itself within the business sector, making it difficult to isolate it from other traders. Even traders may not know that they trade with al-Shabab, he added, while others do know it.</p> <p>Closing accounts</p> <p>Despite government efforts to cut off al-Shabab's financing, the U.N. report says the militants can freely move funds through commercial and Islamic banks and payment firms. The report says the Islamist group moves money in amounts slightly less than \$10,000 to avoid being flagged by anti-money laundering and terror financing monitors.</p>

	<p>The Somali government this week announced it had closed several accounts thought to be operated by al-Shabab.</p> <p>Somalia's Deputy Information Minister Abdirahman al-Adalla spoke Monday at a press conference, saying the government had received more than 10,000 messages from Somalis sharing bank accounts that the militants were using to get money. Al-Adalla said the government directed the banks and remittance firms to block the funded accounts.</p> <p>Abdullahi Godah Barre, Somalia's former minister for planning and international cooperation, told VOA the move to shut bank accounts affiliated with al-Shabab was a step in the right direction. But, he added, those who enable al-Shabab to use the banks must be prosecuted.</p> <p>"The employees of the banks must be held accountable. And also, those who are proxies, whose names are used to open accounts, should be prosecuted and face justice. That should be the next step, in my opinion," Barre said. "But overall, the government's direction is right, and I think that's a very important step that they did. But I don't think it's enough to achieve significant, tangible results."</p> <p>Somalia should also invest more to build the capacity of its investigating agencies to better track the flow of money to the terrorist group, Barre said.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/10 Taliban ban women from parks, funfairs
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/10/taliban-ban-women-from-parks-and-funfairs-in-afghanistan-capital
GIST	<p>The Taliban have banned Afghan women from entering the capital's public parks and funfairs, just months after ordering access to be segregated by gender.</p> <p>The new rule, introduced this week, further squeezes women out of an ever-shrinking public space. They are already banned from travelling without a male escort and forced to wear a hijab or burqa whenever out of the home.</p> <p>Secondary schools for girls have also been shut for over a year across most of the country.</p> <p>"For the past 15 months, we tried our best to arrange and sort it out – and even specified the days," said Mohammad Akif Sadeq Mohajir, spokesman for the Ministry for the Prevention of Vice and Promotion of Virtue.</p> <p>"But still, in some places – in fact, we must say in many places – the rules were violated," he told AFP.</p> <p>"There was mixing [of men and women], hijab was not observed, that's why the decision has been taken for now."</p> <p>The news was met with dismay by women and park operators – who have invested heavily in developing the facilities.</p> <p>"There are no schools, no work ... we should at least have a place to have fun," said one mother, who asked to be identified only as Wahida, as she watched her children play in a park through the window of an adjoining restaurant.</p> <p>"We are just bored and fed-up with being at home all day, our minds are tired," she told AFP.</p> <p>At the next table, Raihana, 21, who is studying Islamic law at university, shared her disappointment after arriving at the park to spend the day with her sisters.</p> <p>"We were very excited ... we are tired of staying at home," she said.</p>

“Obviously, in Islam, it is allowed to go out and visit parks. When you have no freedom in your own country, then what does it mean to live here?”

A few kilometres away, the ferris wheel and most of the other rides in Zazai Park – which offers a spectacular view of Kabul – have ground to a sudden halt because of a lack of business.

Before this week’s ban, it could accommodate hundreds of visitors on days when women brought their children for family gatherings.

On Fridays and public holidays, even more would flock to the park – one of the few attractions in the city.

On Wednesday, only a handful of men wandered nonchalantly through the complex.

Habib Jan Zazai, co-developer of the complex, fears he may have to close down a business that he has poured \$11m into, and which employs more than 250 people.

“Without women, the children will not come alone,” he said. He warned such edicts would discourage investment by foreigners or Afghans living abroad, as well as impact revenue collection. “A government is run by taxes. If an investor is not paying tax, then how can they run?”

Mohammad Tamim, 20, sipping tea in the park during a visit from Kandahar, where he teaches at a madrassa, called the ban “bad news”.

“Every human psychologically needs to be entertained,” he said. “Muslims need to be entertained – especially after 20 years of war.”

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HEADLINE	11/09 Refugee ISIS supporter sentenced 17yrs jail
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/nov/9/isis-supporter-gets-17-years-federal-prison-planni/ https://www.whec.com/national-world/syrian-refugee-gets-17-years-in-church-bomb-plot-case/
GIST	<p>A Pennsylvania man was sentenced to more than 17 years in federal prison for planning to bomb a Pittsburgh church in the name of the terrorist group ISIS, according to prosecutors.</p> <p>The Department of Justice said Wednesday that Mustafa Mousab Alowemer, 24, will serve 208 months after he originally pleaded guilty to one count of attempting to provide material support to ISIS in September 2021.</p> <p>Prosecutors said that Alowemer intended to bomb the church and potentially kill numerous people to support the cause of the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, as well as to inspire other ISIS members in the U.S. to carry out their own attacks.</p> <p>He targeted what he called a “Nigerian Christian” church in order to “take revenge for our [ISIS] brothers in Nigeria,” according to the DOJ.</p> <p>“The defendant’s plan to bomb a Pittsburgh church and risk death or injury to residents in the area in the name of ISIS was thwarted by the extraordinary work of the Pittsburgh Joint Terrorism Task Force,” said U.S. Attorney Cindy K. Chung for the Western District of Pennsylvania. “Our office will continue to hold accountable individuals who threaten the safety of our communities.”</p> <p>In May 2019, Alowemer distributed instructions on how to make and use an improvised explosive device (IED) to an FBI employee who was posing as a fellow ISIS supporter.</p> <p>Alowemer met with the FBI informant four times between April and June of that year. During a meeting on June 11, Alowemer shared his plan with the FBI employee, which included printed maps of</p>

the church, arrival and escape routes, and a 10-point outline detailing his strategy for delivering the explosives in a backpack.

The two met once more on June 19 to review the plan, at which point Alowemer was arrested.

PITTSBURGH (AP) — A Syrian refugee has been sentenced to more than 17 years in what authorities said was a plot to plot to bomb a Christian church in Pittsburgh.

Mustafa Mousab Alowemer, 24, was sentenced Tuesday to 17 years and four months on [a guilty plea](#) last year to a federal charge of attempting to provide material support and resources to the Islamic State group, a militant extremist organization.

Authorities said Alowemer, who was born in Syria and came to the United States in 2016, had [detailed plans](#) in 2019 to bomb the Legacy International Worship Center, a small Christian church on the city's North Side. Prosecutors said he wanted to inspire other U.S. supporters of the Islamic State group to conduct similar actions.

Alowemer gave someone he thought was a fellow IS supporter instructions about how to build and use explosives in May 2019, but that person was in fact with the FBI, prosecutors said. A month later, they said, he purchased nails and nail polish remover to build an explosive device, they said.

In a June 2019 meeting with an FBI agent and an FBI confidential source, Alowemer gave them maps with arrival and escape routes, and a handwritten, 10-point plan about how he would deliver the explosives in a backpack. He was arrested about a week later.

The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review [reports](#) that U.S. District Judge Marilyn Horan told Alowemer on Tuesday that the case had brought “nothing but tragic impact” on him and his family, as well as the community.

“You knew full well what you were doing,” she said. “All of your actions were knowing, intentional and deliberate.”

Prosecutors sought the maximum term of 20 years. The defense argued for an eight-year term, arguing that years of trauma had left Alowemer with post-traumatic stress disorder and major depressive disorder as well as survivor's guilt that made him obsessed about what was happening in his homeland.

“At the time of his offense, he was sick, and that sickness contributed to his offense,” assistant public defender Andrew Lipson said. “That sickness distorted the world around him.”

Assistant U.S. Attorney Soo Song acknowledged that he had endured trauma but said what he planned was not only “an act of terrorism” but had the hallmarks of a hate crime in targeting a Christian church to try to retaliate for actions against ISIS in Nigeria. Other potential targets he identified included classmates and U.S. soldiers, she said.

In court, Alowemer apologized to the church's pastor and congregation as well as the community and the government.

“I understand the severity of my crime,” he said. “I no longer think or act the way I used to. I no longer support ISIS.”

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HEADLINE	11/08 Ominous waters under Antarctic ice
SOURCE	https://www.wired.com/story/scientists-are-uncovering-ominous-waters-under-antarctic-ice/#intcid=wired-verso-hp-trending_609eaf2e-3a1b-48f9-9c2b-412a46dd11e4_popular4-1
GIST	<p>FOR ALL ITS treacherousness and general inclination to kill you, Antarctica’s icy surface is fairly tranquil: vast stretches of miles-thick whiteness, with not a plant or animal to speak of. But way below the surface, where that ice meets land, things get wild. What scientists used to think was a ho-hum subglacial environment is in fact humming with hydrological activity, recent research is revealing, with major implications for global sea-level rise.</p> <p>Researchers just found that, at the base of Antarctica’s ice, an area the size of Germany and France combined is feeding meltwater into a super-pressurized, 290-mile-long river running to the sea. “Thirty years ago, we thought the whole of the ice pretty much was frozen to the bed,” says Imperial College London glaciologist Martin Siegert, coauthor of a new paper in <i>Nature Geoscience</i> describing the finding. “Now we’re in a position that we’ve just never been in before, to understand the whole of the Antarctic ice sheet.”</p> <p>Antarctica’s ice is divided into two main components: the ice <i>sheet</i> that sits on land, and the ice <i>shelf</i> that extends off the coast, floating on seawater. Where the two meet—where the ice lifts off the bed and starts touching the ocean—is known as the grounding line.</p> <p>But the underside of all that ice is obscured. To find out what’s going on below, some scientists have hiked across glaciers while dragging ground-penetrating radar units on sleds—the pings travel through thousands of feet of ice and bounce off the underlying seawater, so the researchers can build detailed maps of what used to be hidden. Others are setting off explosions, then analyzing the seismic waves that come back to the surface to indicate whether there’s land or water below. Still others are lowering torpedo-shaped robots through boreholes to get unprecedented imagery of the underside of the floating ice shelf. Up in the sky, satellites can measure minute changes in surface elevation, which indicates the features below—a swell, for instance, might betray a subglacial lake.</p> <p>This new research on the subglacial river used radar data from aircraft flying over Antarctica. The scientists paired that data with complex modeling of the area’s unique “basal” hydrology, like how water is expected to move underneath miles of ice.</p> <p>As the scientists found out, it moves very weirdly. Because there can be miles of ice resting on Antarctica’s land, and because the region isn’t warming as fast as the Arctic, the ice doesn’t melt the way you might think, from the sun striking the surface. That’s the way it works in places like Greenland, where ever-warming temperatures are creating lakes on the surface of the ice, and that water then leaks down through crevasses, known as moulins.</p> <p>But in Antarctica, the basal melt instead comes from the land warming the ice. While it’s not volcanically boisterous, Antarctica has enough geothermal heat to get melt going. Further heat is provided by friction, as the ice grinds across bedrock. That means that instead of the melt happening top down, it happens at the bottom.</p> <p>It’s not a tremendous amount of melt per square foot. But over an area that’s the size of two large European countries, that scales up. “What we concluded is the melting is really small—it’s like a millimeter per year,” says Siegert. “But the catchment is <i>enormous</i>, so you don’t need much melting. That all funnels together into this river, which is several hundred kilometers long, and it’s three times the rate of flow of the river Thames in London.”</p> <p>That water is under extreme pressure, both because there’s a lot of ice pressing down from above and because there isn’t much room between the ice and the bedrock for the liquid to move around. “And because it’s under high pressure, it can act to lift the ice off its bed, which can reduce friction,” Siegert says. “And if you reduce that basal friction, the ice can flow much quicker than it would do otherwise.” Think of that ice like a puck sliding across an air hockey table, only instead of riding on air, the ice is riding on pressurized water.</p>

This massive hidden river, says University of Waterloo glaciologist Christine Dow, lead author of the new paper, “can pump a huge volume of fresh water into the ocean.” And that could be bad news for the glacial ice sheet’s connection to the floating ice shelf. “Where the ice begins to float is the most sensitive region,” she continues. “So anything that is going to change where that grounding line rests is going to have significant control on how much sea level rise we have in the future.”

What’s holding the ice sheet back—and keeping sea levels from jumping many feet—is the ice shelf, which acts like a big, heavy cork to slow the flow of a glacier into the sea. But in Antarctica, these corks are fragmenting, as warming waters eat away at the underside of them. The ice shelf of Antarctica’s Thwaites Glacier (aka the Doomsday Glacier), for instance, could crumble in [three to five years](#), recent research suggests. If we lost Thwaites entirely, it alone would contribute two feet to sea levels.

It’s not just Thwaites. Researchers are finding that many of Antarctica’s grounding lines are receding, like hairlines. Yet models that predict the future state of these glaciers assume that grounding lines are static. Scientists already know that those models are missing another key factor that may affect how well these lines can hold: an effect known as [tidal pumping](#). When tides go in and out, they heave the ice shelf up and down, allowing warm seawater to rush inland and melt the underside of the ice. This new research now shows that pressurized meltwater is also coming from the other direction, flowing from inland to the grounding line.

“The problem is, if you have a lot of fresh water being pumped into the ocean, it buoyantly moves up toward the base of the ice, and it’s dragging warm ocean water up with it, melting that ice,” says Dow. “That causes that grounding line to retreat. And then all of the ice that was formerly grounded is now floating to *instantly* add to sea level rise and destabilize the whole system.” In other words, the ice doesn’t have to melt to raise water levels, because its massive bulk displaces liquid too.

Another concern is what will happen if Antarctica’s ice starts behaving more like Greenland’s—melting from the top. In that scenario, crevasses would open up in the glacial ice during the summer, allowing water to pour down to the bedrock, supercharging the subglacial hydrology. “There’s likely to be surface melt at some point in the future, probably within the next 100 years,” says Dow. “If that water is able to get to the base of the ice, then we could have a system that’s a lot more like Greenland and a lot more seasonally driven. We don’t really know what that’s going to do yet.”

“This article is a notable contribution to our understanding of how the veins and arteries of fresh water beneath the Antarctic ice sheets may look and act,” Penn State glaciologist Nathan Stevens, who wasn’t involved in the paper, emailed WIRED from Antarctica, where he’s conducting his own research. “Subglacial hydrology is one of the big players in how ice sheets behave—now, in the future, and in the past.”

If there’s any good news in this situation, says University of Houston physicist Pietro Milillo, it’s that scientists are gathering ever more data on the hitherto hidden dynamics playing out beneath Antarctica’s ice. “This paper adds a piece to the puzzle of understanding what’s actually going on at the grounding line,” says Milillo, who studies Antarctic glaciers but wasn’t involved in the research.

Previously, Milillo says, there was a mismatch between the satellite data and the models. The elevation changes that satellites were measuring from space would suggest more ice loss than the amount of melt that models predicted seawater would cause at the grounding line. Now, he says, it’s clear the satellites were right. “We can actually account for that,” Milillo says, “because it’s *fresh* water that’s melting the glaciers from the bottom.”

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HEADLINE	11/10 Alarm: ‘spicier’ Arctic Ocean
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/news/2022/nov/10/weatherwatch-spicier-arctic-ocean-water-rising-temperatures-sea-ice

GIST	<p>Oceanographers sometimes classify seawater as either “spicy”, meaning warm and salty, or “minty”, when it is cooler and has a lower salt content. Temperature and salinity are important factors because of their effect on the density of seawater.</p> <p>Cold water is heavier and tends to sink, which can drive large-scale movement. This contributes, for example, to the well-known El Niño oscillation off South America. Salty water is also denser, and again tends to sink.</p> <p>These two effects may cancel each other out though, so spicy water, which is warmer but saltier, can have the same density as cooler but fresher minty water.</p> <p>In some sea areas, such as the Bay of Bengal, salty and minty bodies of water with the same density swirl against each other. Understanding the mixing process is important because it affects the temperature at the surface, a key factor in the formation of seasonal monsoon rains.</p> <p>There is concern that the Arctic Ocean is becoming spicier because of climate change. Previously, water density in this region was determined largely by the salt levels.</p> <p>Rising temperatures may lead to spicy intrusions and warm water persisting at the surface and not mixing with minty water below. This could have a profound effect on the formation of sea ice and accelerate its disappearance.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/10 Biggest art sale in history nets \$1.5B
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2022/nov/10/paul-allen-art-collection-15bn-auction-christies
GIST	<p>Dozens of works by artists including Paul Cézanne and Vincent van Gogh fetched a total of \$1.5bn at an auction of the late Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen’s vast collection of paintings and sculpture.</p> <p>The total represented the highest amount ever collected at a single art auction, according to the auction house, Christie’s in New York. Proceeds will be donated to philanthropic causes in accordance with the wishes of Allen, who died in 2018.</p> <p>Allen personally selected all the works, which span more than 500 years, rather than relying on an art buyers to pick them out as some billionaires do.</p> <p>“When you look at a painting you’re looking into a different country, into someone else’s imagination, how they saw it,” Allen said when some of his collection went on show in 2016.</p> <p>Several of the winning bids smashed previous records for individual artists and many exceeded the expected sales prices estimated by Christie’s.</p> <p>Before Wednesday’s sale, Christie’s said it was “poised to be the largest and most exceptional art auction in history”, eclipsing the \$922m achieved by the sale of the Macklowe collection in May, after the divorce of the property tycoon Harry Macklowe from his wife, Linda.</p> <p>Among the priciest works sold was Pointillist pioneer Georges Seurat’s Les Poseuses, Ensemble (Petite version), an 1888 oil on canvas depicting three nude women. It fetched \$149.2m including fees, a record for a Seurat piece.</p> <p>Cézanne’s La Montagne Sainte-Victoire, a colourful landscape painted from 1888-1890, sold for \$137.8m, another record. And a Gustav Klimt 1903 painting, Birch Forest, set the high mark for a Klimt work, selling for \$104.6m.</p> <p>Other notable sales included the highest price ever for a van Gogh painting. The artist’s Verger avec cyprès sold for \$117.2m. Paul Gauguin’s 1899 oil on burlap Maternité II fetched \$105.7m.</p>

	<p>Paintings by Georgia O’Keeffe, Claude Monet, David Hockney, Andrew Wyeth and Pablo Picasso also sold, along with sculptures by Alexander Calder and Max Ernst.</p> <p>A 1905 print of a photograph by Edward Steichen, The Flatiron, sold for \$11.8m, a record for a Steichen work and nearly four times Christie’s highest estimate.</p> <p>Additional pieces from Allen’s collection will be offered at auction on Thursday.</p>
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Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	11/09 Downtown Spokane shooting: 1 injured
SOURCE	https://www.krem.com/article/news/crime/downtown-spokane-shooting-leaves-one-person-injured/293-5464a5e1-2336-451e-8483-7b48702245fe
GIST	<p>SPOKANE COUNTY, Wash. — One person was injured after a shooting in downtown Spokane Wednesday morning.</p> <p>According to Spokane Police spokesperson Nick Briggs, the shooting happened on E. Pacific Avenue and S. Pine Street. There have not been any arrests, and details about the suspect are unclear.</p> <p>Officers are investigating the case at this time. The name of the person injured hasn't been released.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/09 Bystanders injured in crossfire shootout
SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/local/bystanders-caught-crossfire-seattle-central-district-shooting-injures-2-people-spd-crime-gun-violence-washington-police#
GIST	<p>SEATTLE, Wash. — Investigators say the two people who were shot Tuesday night in Seattle’s Central District neighborhood were caught in the crossfire of a shootout.</p> <p>According to an update from Seattle police, the victims – a 24-year-old woman and a 27-year-old man – were walking home from the store just before 9:00 p.m. near East Adler Street and Martin Luther King Jr. way when the shooting happened.</p> <p>Police recovered around two dozen shell casings from the area. A witness told investigators four people were shooting at each other in the street.</p> <p>“We didn’t know what was going on, we just kind of hid out in the basement,” said John, a neighbor whose house was shot by stray gunfire. “That was absolutely wild, I wasn’t ready for anything like that.”</p> <p>Both victims were rushed to the hospital in stable condition.</p> <p>Doorbell video shared with KOMO News shows the victims yelling for help after the shooting. In the video, a woman yells “I got shot in my leg! I’m calling 911.”</p> <p>Seattle police said they had a description of the suspects fleeing in a white Chevy Impala.</p> <p>Tuesday's shooting happened just down the road from the spot where community leader and business owner D'vonne Pickett Jr. was fatally shot in October.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/09 Seattle school shooting: 2 teens held
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SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/2-teens-held-in-juvenile-detention-after-ingraham-high-school-shooting-in-seattle/
GIST	<p>A King County judge found probable cause Wednesday to hold a 14-year-old boy in juvenile detention on suspicion of premeditated first-degree murder in a fatal shooting the day before at Ingraham High School.</p> <p>The teen, arrested on a Metro bus roughly an hour after gunfire rang out in a hallway at the North Seattle school, was one of two ordered to remain in detention by Chief Juvenile Court Judge Averil Rothrock. The other, a 15-year-old boy, is suspected of rendering criminal assistance to the suspected shooter and unlawfully possessing a gun.</p> <p>The 14-year-old waived his first appearance at the Judge Patricia H. Clark Children and Family Justice Center, where Rothrock found probable cause for two additional charges: second-degree unlawful possession of a firearm and possession of a dangerous weapon on school property.</p> <p>The boy's parents attended by phone but did not address the court. A person representing the family of the victim also listened to the hearing by phone, according to Senior Deputy Prosecutor Brent Kling, who told Rothrock that the victim's mother was admitted to a hospital in the aftermath of the shooting.</p> <p>The King County Medical Examiner's Office has not yet publicly identified the student who was killed. The Seattle Times typically does not name juvenile suspects unless they are charged as adults.</p> <p>Police responded to reports of shots fired at the North Seattle high school around 10 a.m. Tuesday and arrested the two suspects about an hour later.</p> <p>Kling told Rothrock a .357-caliber handgun was found in the 15-year-old's backpack. The gun's magazine was empty, but there was a round in the slide that appeared to match the caliber of shell casings recovered by police at the shooting scene, Kling said.</p> <p>Though the 15-year-old's involvement is still under investigation, witnesses reported seeing him with the 14-year-old before the shooting, Kling said. Prosecutors expect to file charges against both teens Monday.</p> <p>Defense attorney Mark Bradley argued for the 15-year-old's release, telling the judge the boy has no criminal history and would be under close supervision by his parents. The boy's parents said the family recently moved to Seattle from Auburn.</p> <p>"He's never been in trouble. He's a good kid," the boy's mother said in court.</p> <p>"We just moved up here. ... This is not like him at all," his father added.</p> <p>Rothrock explained that her decision to keep him in detention can be revisited at his second court appearance next week.</p> <p>"I'm going to let things calm down a little ... and maintain the status quo for today," she said.</p> <p>Prosecutors are expected to address whether they intend to seek a discretionary decline hearing involving the 14-year-old after a charging decision is made in his case.</p> <p>Under state law, cases involving 16- and 17-year-olds charged with serious violent offenses — including first- and second-degree murder and first-degree rape, assault and manslaughter — can be "auto-declined," meaning the juvenile court automatically declines jurisdiction and the criminal case is filed in adult or superior court.</p> <p>Discretionary decline hearings are limited to the cases of 15-year-olds charged with a serious violent offense or cases involving those 14 or younger charged with first- or second-degree murder. If a case</p>

	<p>remains in juvenile court instead of being transferred to adult court, the juvenile court loses jurisdiction once the respondent turns 21.</p> <p>Though fairly rare in King County, it can take about a year for a discretionary decline hearing to be held. A juvenile court judge is required to weigh eight factors — known as the “Kent factors” for a 1966 U.S. Supreme Court decision — that take into account things like the seriousness of the offense and the youth’s sophistication and maturity before deciding if declining jurisdiction is in the best interest of the youth or the public.</p> <p>A judge’s finding to decline juvenile jurisdiction must be supported by a preponderance of the evidence, though it is not required that all eight Kent factors support the decision.</p> <p>If a case is moved from juvenile to adult court and the defendant is convicted, judges have the discretion to impose a sentence outside the standard ranges for adult defendants.</p> <p>While 16- and 17-year-olds convicted of first-degree murder must serve the mandatory minimum of 20 years in prison before they can petition the state for release, a judge has the discretion to sentence younger juveniles to less than 20 years.</p>
Return to Top	<p>THE ‘KENT FACTORS’</p> <p><i>The eight Kent factors a judge must weigh in determining whether a case remains in juvenile court or is transferred to adult court:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The seriousness of the alleged offense to the community and whether the protection of the community requires waiver;</i> • <i>Whether the alleged offense was committed in an aggressive, violent, premeditated or willful manner;</i> • <i>Whether the alleged offense was against persons or property, with greater weight being afforded to offenses against persons, especially if personal injury resulted;</i> • <i>The prosecutive merit of the complaint, i.e., whether there is evidence upon which a grand jury may be expected to return an indictment;</i> • <i>The desirability of trial and disposition of the entire offense in one court when the juvenile’s associates in the alleged offense are adults;</i> • <i>The sophistication and maturity of the juvenile as determined by consideration of the juvenile’s home, environmental situation, emotional attitude and pattern of living;</i> • <i>The record and previous history of the juvenile, including previous contacts with law enforcement, juvenile courts, probation, and commitment to juvenile institutions;</i> • <i>The prospects for adequate protection of the public and likelihood of reasonable rehabilitation of the juvenile (if he is found to have committed the alleged offense) by the use of procedures, services and facilities current available to the Juvenile Court.</i> <p><i>Source: Kent v. United States</i></p>

HEADLINE	11/09 Seattle Ingraham High School shooting
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/seattles-ingraham-high-school-shooting-what-we-know/
GIST	<p>A student was shot and killed at Ingraham High School in North Seattle Tuesday, which brought hours of lockdown, a tearful reunification and a candlelight vigil.</p> <p>The shooting appeared to be a “targeted attack” and officials “have no reason to believe this was part of a bigger plan,” according to Seattle Public Schools Superintendent Brent Jones.</p> <p>Police responded to reports of shots fired at the high school around 10 a.m. Officers said they had arrested one suspect by 11 a.m. At a news conference later that afternoon, city officials announced the victim had died.</p> <p>The student who was killed has not yet been publicly identified. Police have not released any information about the suspect.</p>

Here's what we know so far:

The families involved

Standing outside Ingraham High School while the building remained in lockdown, police Chief Adrian Diaz told reporters Seattle had "joined a long list of cities this year that have had school shootings."

Hours later, at a news conference at City Hall, he said, "We have two families that have been impacted: Somebody that is going to jail and somebody that has lost their life."

Diaz said the department is reviewing security footage of the shooting.

Police recovered a gun from the suspect but said they couldn't yet confirm whether it was the weapon used in the shooting.

They declined to say whether the suspect was a fellow student.

The timeline

At 9:55 a.m. Tuesday, police received reports of a shooting at the school, they said.

At 10:03 a.m., Seattle Police Department said on Twitter officers were responding to the school, in the 1800 block of North 135th Street near Haller Lake.

The shooting took place inside the building, about 100 feet from the nearest entrance, Diaz said. Many witnesses were in the school hallway.

"It wasn't at the doorstep. It wasn't at the front entrance," he said. "It was within the school environment."

Officers entered and found a student with a gunshot wound. Police provided aid to the student until medics arrived. That took place within 10 minutes of emergency calls, according to police.

The shooting happened in the passing time before second period, according to Madeleyne De Leon, an Ingraham student.

De Leon, 14, was walking with two friends to gym class when she got a call from another friend. "There were shots. Get away from the school as fast as possible," he said, and hung up. De Leon and her friends ran from the school to a nearby grocery store parking lot, where they waited for their parents to pick them up.

Karis Williams, another Ingraham student, said she hadn't practiced what to do but that her whole class seemed to know what to do when her teacher yelled for them to get in a corner.

"It just hit me as soon as I was in the corner and everyone was freaking out," Williams, who is in 11th grade, said. "People just started texting, and people were shaking. I was shaking."

Other students said they saw their classmates crying, writing letters to loved ones and making phone calls to say "I love you."

The suspect was arrested on a Metro bus about an hour after gunfire rang out. Police said later Tuesday a person on the bus with the suspect did not appear to be involved.

The building remained in lockdown for several hours. Students began meeting loved ones around 12:30 p.m. at a reunification site, a parking lot and grassy area at the intersection of Meridian Avenue North and North 135th Street.

Tables were set up in alphabetical order out front, and staff yelled out one last name at a time.

The reunification

As word of the shooting spread, hundreds of parents began arriving at the school to pick up their children. They found a campus surrounded by police tape and swarming with officers.

Many parents and guardians were on their phones, updating worried family members. There were snacks and coffee, but tensions were high, and some parents waited two hours to be reunited with their kids.

Fred Jala, whose child is a sophomore at Ingraham, said he was feeling lots of emotions: “scared for my student’s safety, sadness for the victim, sadness for the students for being so close to violence, anger at gun culture and its enablers.”

Bernard Richard Hall, whose 15-year-old son is an Ingraham sophomore, was also among parents searching for answers Tuesday.

Hall learned of the shooting through an email from the school district. Wanting more information, he drove to the school. As he stood in the parking lot waiting for an update, while the school remained on lockdown and most students remained inside, Hall covered his face with a tissue and wiped tears from his eyes.

“You hear about it in the news all the time,” Hall said. “Maybe it’s cliché but it’s different when it happens to you.”

Candlelight vigil

Tuesday evening, about 40 people gathered inside the Haller Lake United Methodist Church sanctuary for a vigil honoring the student who was killed.

Michael Ramos, executive director of the Church Council of Greater Seattle, told mourners the sanctuary could serve as a space for them to heal from the day’s violence and trauma.

“This neighborhood is meant to be a safe place for everyone, especially children and students,” he said, asking them to pray for grieving family members and those whose security was violently disrupted.

The school

Ingraham is one of Seattle’s 18 public high schools. Its attendance area stretches from the north end of Green Lake to the city’s northern border, and to Puget Sound on the west. With about 1,462 students, it is one of the city’s large, comprehensive high schools. In the last school year it had a graduation rate of 90%, according to state data.

Gov. Jay Inslee, who played on the school’s state championship basketball team in 1968-69, is one of its most famous graduates.

“Thankful for Seattle Police being on the scene and helping to resolve this incident before the shooter had the chance to hurt more people,” he said in a tweet. “Our children should never have to experience this. We can and must do better by them.”

The North Seattle school offers the rigorous International Baccalaureate program, which allows high school students to earn college credit; it’s one of only 13 such programs in Washington state.

According to a school climate survey from the spring, about 83% of students responded favorably to questions about relationships and belonging, but only 62% responded favorably to questions about behavior and safety.

At least 271 gun incidents have occurred at K-12 schools across the U.S. this year, according to the [K-12 School Shooting Database](#), which tracks gun violence on school campuses.

	<p>Such incidents include any time “a gun is brandished, is fired, or a bullet hits school property for any reason, regardless of the number of victims, time, or day of the week.”</p> <p>More than 300 people were wounded or killed in those incidents, according to the database.</p> <p>Classes at Ingraham High School have been canceled for Wednesday and Thursday.</p> <p>Students can access grief and loss support from Seattle Public Schools’ staff at the Bitter Lake Community Center from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/09 Sumner PD: woman admits starting fire
SOURCE	https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/crime/article268528777.html
GIST	<p>One day after a large fire tore through a building in downtown Sumner, destroying the century-old structure and damaging nearby businesses, police arrested a woman they believe started the fire intentionally.</p> <p>The suspect, who is in her 20s, is being held at Pierce County Jail on unrelated warrants. A City of Sumner spokesperson said arson charges had been referred to the Pierce County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office. An official with that office said charges were expected to be filed Thursday.</p> <p>Speaking to Sumner City Council during a special study session Monday, Police Chief Brad Moericke said that in a taped interview with the suspect Nov. 3, she admitted to starting the fire by igniting cardboard behind 1003-1005 Main Street.</p> <p>Police believe the woman started the Oct. 28 building fire intentionally. City spokesperson Carmen Palmer said Wednesday that when police took the suspect into custody, she answered questions about the fire and initially admitted to being present for a “warming fire” behind the building. Palmer said during the Nov. 3 police interview, the woman said she purposefully started the fire to have police and fire officials “do their jobs.”</p> <p>In a phone call, Palmer said police believe the woman’s intentions had to do with her past interactions with police and fire officials. She said the police department’s investigation was consistent with the Pierce County fire marshal’s conclusion that the fire started outside the building.</p> <p>Police identified the woman as a suspect after several businesses shared video with Sumner Police Department on Oct. 29 that showed several “transients” in the area before and after the report of the fire, Moericke told Sumner council members.</p> <p>“Officers were able to identify one of the females in the video from very frequent, recent contacts,” Moericke said.</p> <p>Police interviewed another man identified by the suspect, who was seen on video provided by nearby businesses. Palmer said investigations are ongoing into the identity and potential involvement of other individuals.</p> <p>The fire started next to a collection of recycled cooking oils from a restaurant, also near three gas meters that serviced the building, Moericke said.</p> <p>Speaking during the same meeting, East Pierce Fire & Rescue Chief Jon Parkinson said fire from those melted gas meters impeded crews’ ability to put the fire out. He said Puget Sound Energy crews had to jackhammer through asphalt to shut off the gas line.</p> <p>Typically, Parkinson said, crews would have accessed a shutoff valve in the street, but he said PSE crews weren’t able to locate it. He speculated that the valve had been paved over at some point.</p>

HEADLINE	11/10 Repeat child molester sentenced to 610yrs
SOURCE	https://www.foxnews.com/us/california-child-molester-sentenced-610-years-prison
GIST	<p>A child molester in Southern California was sentenced to 610 years in prison on Tuesday, after being found guilty of molesting a child from the ages of 4 to 6 years old</p> <p>Travis Edward Martin, a Santa Paula resident, sexually abused a child in Ventura County and Orange County from 2019 to 2021.</p> <p>The abuse began when the child was 4 years old and continued until 2021. Martin was found guilty on all counts and special allegations on October 3.</p> <p>The 37-year-old was initially charged with seven counts of lewd or lascivious acts with a child.</p> <p>Martin was also charged with one count of using a child for the production of pornography and one count of possessing child pornography.</p> <p>According to the Ventura County District Attorney's Office, the perpetrator was previously convicted of child molestation before the most recent case.</p> <p>"We are pleased with the jury's verdict and the judge's sentence in this case, which accurately reflects the harm caused by the defendant's horrific crimes," Supervising Deputy District Attorney Rafael Orellana, who prosecuted the case, said in a statement.</p> <p>"The 610 years to life sentence will serve to protect our community and demonstrates that there is zero tolerance for the sexual abuse and exploitation of children," the statement added.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/09 Couple in plot to sell secrets: long jail time
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/US/couple-accused-selling-nuclear-related-secrets-receives-longer/story?id=93011647
GIST	<p>Diana Toebe, 46, concocted a false narrative about a plot to sell secrets involving submarine nuclear propulsion systems to a foreign country in an attempt to pin the crime solely on her husband and avoid prison time for herself, a federal judge said Wednesday before sentencing Toebe to 21 years in prison.</p> <p>Her attorney cast her husband, 43-year-old Jonathan Toebe, a former nuclear engineer for the US Navy, as the "brainchild" of a "cover plan" to spare his wife in order to have a parent available to care for the couple's children but the judge said Diana Toebe deserved an enhanced sentence.</p> <p>"That's obstruction, plain and simple," Judge Gina Groh said on Wednesday. It's on top of the charged conduct that the judge determined "posed a legitimate concern for the national security of this country."</p> <p>Groh sentenced Jonathan Toebe to 19 in prison. Both sentences are beyond what the government had suggested.</p> <p>Ten years were added to Diana Toebe's expected sentence because she tried to smuggle two letters to her husband while in custody by placing them in her laundry and having her roommate intercept them.</p> <p>"Flush this once you've read it. My feelings right now are very complex and include feeling betrayed, lied to, abandoned and cheated. But you don't simply throw away 18 years of marriage. I still love you. Beyond that, I don't know what to think," the judge quoted the first letter saying.</p> <p>She pleaded to her husband, asking him to fall on the sword, plead guilty, and abdicate her from her allegations.</p>

"You put me in great danger. Even with the weakness of the government's case, I may still be convicted on circumstantial evidence. I could go to jail for life for something I didn't do. My lawyers don't think they will give you a plea deal that doesn't involve me pleading guilty," the letter said. The couple pleaded guilty to their roles in a conspiracy to communicate restricted data and secrets to a foreign country, which ABC News has previously identified as Brazil.

The judge said the couple was willing to peddle "secrets that go to the very heart of this country."

"This was not a crime that she committed at her insistence. Her husband was the principle actor here," said defense attorney Barry Beck in making a pitch for a lesser sentence. "She made a bad decision that she made not have made if she hadn't been suffering."

The defense had suggested Diana Toebbe was suffering from mental illness but the judge was unmoved.

"Your client put this country in grave danger," Groh said.

According to prosecutors, Jonathan Toebbe, 43, abused his access to top-secret government information and sold information of Virginia-class submarines to someone he believed was a representative of Brazil but who was actually an undercover FBI agent.

Diana Toebbe acted as a lookout, prosecutors said, at several "dead-drop" locations where memory cards containing the information were left concealed in items from a chewing gum wrapper to a peanut butter sandwich.

"The Toebbes conspired to sell restricted defense information that would place the lives of our men and women in uniform and the security of the United States at risk," Assistant Attorney General Matthew G. Olsen of the Justice Department's National Security Division said in a statement Wednesday.

Jonathan Toebbe declared himself "deeply ashamed" of his conduct, which he attributed to a "mental breakdown" due to the stresses of work, the pandemic and family.

"I failed in my responsibility to the American people to preserve the secrets entrusted in me," Toebbe said. "I should have done better."

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